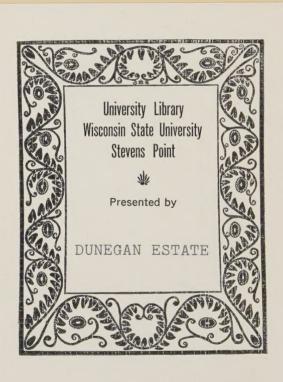
NICHTS ABROAD KONRAD BERCOVICI















NIGHTS ABROAD

BY KONRAD BERCOVICI

AROUND THE WORLD IN NEW YORK

ON NEW SHORES

NIGHTS ABROAD

Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2023 with funding from Kahle/Austin Foundation



"SHE EXPECTED ME TO FOLLOW"

NIGHTS ABROAD

KONRAD BERCOVICI

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

E. H. SUYDAM



THE CENTURY CO.

NEW YORK · LONDON

COPYRIGHT, 1926, 1927, 1928, BY
THE CENTURY CO.
COPYRIGHT, 1927, 1928, BY
COLLEGE HUMOR
First printing, September, 1928

D 921 .B517

TO NAOMI



INTRODUCTION

TO NIGHTS ABROAD-BY KONRAD BERCOVICI

I have never gone out in search of material. Somehow, things worthy of notice have come my way while I was traveling for other purposes; or no purpose at all. Cities, rivers, mountains and people are never settings or set-ups for me, but are what they are, so poignantly, their reality so painful, that I shriek out in pain before I am relieved of their presence. Writing down what I have seen and thought is the mental surgery I practise upon myself. These shrieks and cries have become chapters and stories in this volume. At home nowheres, because at home everywhere, I have wandered over the face of the earth not because of the irresistibility of the romance of the road but in search for that anchorage which has held and holds men to the inertia of their birthright.

I have wanted to be a Frenchman in France, and an American in America; a Venetian when in Venice, and a Greek in Athens. I cannot explain failure with the credit ledger of my blood but find reasons on the debit side of the other's. It is the fault of the

INTRODUCTION

Frenchman that I am not a Frenchman, and the fault of the Greek that I am not a Greek.

Have I been able to plumb the depths of the souls of people I am describing; have I gotten the measure, the odor and the atmosphere of the cities against whose walls I have beaten my Don Quixotic wings? Qui lo sa?

I shall learn to do much better in my next life.

KONRAD BERCOVICE

CONTENTS

VENICE—THAT DEAR OLD LADY	3
TOLEDO-THE ADVENTURE	19
DAMASCUS—COBWEBS AND DIRT	35
MONTE CARLO-THE FAITH OF MEN	49
AMSTERDAM—THE ODOR OF THE CITY	61
LONDON—WHO SAYS SHE'S FLAT ON HER BACK	77
BERLIN—WE LOVE PARIS	93
MILAN-THUS SPAKE MUSSOLINI	107
COPENHAGEN—HAMLETS	123
JERUSALEM—THE VALUE OF TEARS	139
ATHENS—GREEK GODS	157
HAVANAHARMONICS	169
CONSTANTINOPLE-ALLAH IL ALLAH	199
PARIS—BON SOIR, MONSIEUR	211
OLD MADRID—THERE ARE NO SHADOWS	229
BUDAPEST-GENIUS MUST LIVE	247
VIENNA-WHERE WALTZES RING	261
BUCHAREST—HOME HOME	275
WHEN PARIS WAS MINE	295



ILLUSTRATIONS

"SHE EXPECTED ME TO FOLLOW" FRONTISE	PIECE
VENICE-SYNTHESIS OF THE EAST	2
"SHE MET ME ONE NIGHT ON THE BRIDGE"	18
DAMASCUS HAS ITS FAMOUS MAIN STREET	34
THE CASINO GARDENS OFFER SOME SOLACE	48
AMSTERDAM-TULIPS AND DECAYED FISH	60
ST. PAUL'S-ILLUSION OF ROME IN LONDON	76
BERLIN DEFEATED WAS STILL THE STRONGER	92
MILAN-GENESIS OF THE MARCH ON ROME	106
THE MELANCHOLY DANES LIVE ON NUMBERS	122
THE WAILING WALL OF THE JEWS	138
IN THE SHADOW OF THE ACROPOLIS	156
HAVANA-WHERE ILLUSIONS ARE BORN	168
CONSTANTINOPLE ASPIRES TO ALLAH	198
AMERICAN ESTHETES-STYLE 1928	210
SUNDAYS THE GODLY THIEVES ARE MER-	
CHANTS	228
BUDAPEST-JAZZ AND GIPSIES	246
RIOTING IN THE STREETS OF VIENNA	260
BUCHAREST-NEXT DAY THE KING DIED	274
PARIS WAS NOT YET GREENWICH VILLAGE	294



VENICE THAT DEAR OLD LADY



VENICE-SYNTHESIS OF THE EAST

VENICE

THAT DEAR OLD LADY

I HAD spent the whole day at Lido. An indescribable architectural hodgepodge built by and for people without taste, Lido is a glorified Coney Island. Houses and men are shricking, howling. Everything is new, everything still smelling of paint and varnish. At the casinos and gambling-palaces, jostling elbowing men and women from the four corners of the earth wear the newest clothes from London and Paris. Their fingers and wrists and arms are decked with jewels, louder even than the clink of the money on the gaming-table and the sharp drill of the ball on the roulette-wheel. Not only are the jewels and the clothes new, but the men and women also seem new themselves—new to the things they wear, new to the things they do, new and unaccustomed, as shallow as the shallow waters of the Adriatic lagoons on which Lido is built.

It faces old Venice insolently as if saying: "I am as good as you—nay, I am better than you. I shall be here longer than you."

For such is the march of history; the parvenu of

to-day is the traditionalist of to-morrow. Only yesterday Venice itself was called the "parvenu of the Adriatic" by the Dalmatians and the Macedonians, by the Lombards and the Albanians.

Lido and Venice! Lido, a commercial venture on the Adriatic, grown out of greed for gain, risen under the eyes of enterprising promoters, along shores more barren than the billows of the ocean.

Venice, shaped and curved by the winds and the rains of thousands of years, a city already long before the beginning of the Christian era, before the cities of Aquileia and Padua controlled the lagoons in the estuary of the Adriatic.

Fisher-folk and salt-diggers were already living there under written laws when the invading Huns and Lombards drove mainland people to seek refuge among them in the inaccessible lagoons. In the narrow winding streets one hears the echo and gets the feeling of past centuries. The lore of the world is in the air, in every nook, in every twist of the deep courtyards of the houses on the old, greenwatered, fetid canals. Stones and wrought-iron brought by sailors from Phenicia and Egypt are incorporated in homes still standing in the Ghetto Vecchio, on the shores of the minor canals, on the Fusina and the Giudecca. And though the too crowded water city has been visited by black pestilence after pestilence, and blue plague after plague, the last one of which in 1630 killed half of its inhabitants, Venice raises its head proudly, facing Lido with unequaled disdain.

For all Lido's youth, for all her newness, she will never equal Venice. She has risen too fast. What is beautiful in Venice was built not out of greed for gain, but out of a pagan sense for beauty among a people who had the beautiful lines of the lowlying Euganean Hills before their eyes and who rode the richly colored sails of Chioggia from the Adrian Gulf to the shores of Asia.

Venice, the city built by romantic merchant-folk with a better eye for the display of power and wealth than for just proportions; Venice, which has ransacked the ruined cities of Altinum for their precious stones, trading gold and glitter in the Levant to buy rich marbles from Greece and red porphyries

from Egypt.

Seated in a black gondola whose prow, like the prows of all the gondolas of Venice, was shaped like the neck of a violin, a romping Pegasus on the sea, I watched the setting of the sun. The atmosphere was poignantly delicate. The air was changing from pale blue to amethyst, to pink, turquoise; from dark blue to indigo; as if a series of colored veils were being showered from above over the city. The color of the waters changed. The current from the Tre Porti passing through the Torcello, ordinarily yellow, began to look greenish. The blue waters of the Erasmo and the Lido turned red. And the green swift torrent from Malamocco and Chioggia turned

from red to purple and mingled with the fine nuances of the colored shadows thrown from overhead.

Emerging from the hotels on the Grand Canal, gondolas went racing back and forth in all directions, steered by the rhythmic movement of the standing, tousle-haired, stalwart gondolieri, leaning to one side and to the other on their long paddles as they rocked back and forth. The bells of the churches were ringing. My gondoliere was telling me the name of every church from the sound of its bells.

"This one comes from the Redentore. It has a fuller sound than the one of San Giacomo. This one is from the Tolentini. It has a peculiar quality. It reverberates and echoes louder than any under the Ponte Storto. Shall I lead you there? No? Listen to the sour angry sound of the Serviti. It hurts my ears. Had I any power I would still its tongue forever. It is the worst bell in Venice. The metal must have been cursed when it was poured into the form to give it shape."

Other gondolas passed by. They were slowing down as the evening advanced. Right and left of me people of all nations gliding up and down the dark unbroken waves. A sentimental look had stolen into their eyes. In the gondolas with only a man and a woman in them, they huddled close together, as if the enveloping fearful beauty was frightening them.

Sounds of a mandolin broke into the broad, rhythmic, soft splashes of the receding waters. A

raw-boned fisherman on the shore sat on the pavement outside a cheap restaurant and shared his meal with a cat lapping from the same plate. To my left a huge flat-bottomed black craft, loaded to the very top with building-wood, was being rowed to Lido by one vigorous youngster bringing all his weight on the paddle, on which he pinioned himself to force the creaking, groaning boat onward.

The gilded columns of the patrician mansions that line the chief artery of Venice throw their lights on the shimmering waters. The cumbersome shadow of the church of Santa Maria della Salute bars the middle of the stream. The inverted flight of steps and the domes seem to rise out of the black bottom.

A little farther away the Gothic face of San Gregorio draws its apse obliquely across, and from the adjoining cloister of a fourteenth-century monastery comes a muffled hum of singing voices. The sliced ancient Lombardy columns, the Byzantine style of the Manzoni Palace, seem to dance with the Accademia.

A few intervening houses, and a strong odor of musk in decay acquainted me with the fact that I was in front of the Contarini Palace. The Contarini were once the wealthiest men in Venice. In the fifteenth century they owned three palaces on the canal.

Twenty-odd years ago I knew the last of the Contarini, of that family which has given eight

doges to the Venetian Republic. Jacopo Contarini—Doge, as he was familiarly called by his friends—died in lodgings of starvation. Two of the Contarini palaces are owned by Alexandrian merchants. One is a brown mass of stones and putrid lumber.

I stopped in front of the Palazzo Rezzonico, where Robert Browning died. How much the somberness of this sixteenth-century architecture resembles his thoughts and his poetry! What a sad, quiet life the poet must have led there! How much does all this stone and mosaic explain his verses!

A little farther away, in theatrical retreat, is the house where Eleanora Duse lived. Across the water is now the Venetian home of Gabriele d'Annunzio. It is a mock-modest, yellow-painted, angular structure, with a little garden in front of it, the many windows all looking outward. The whole house was bathed in violent white electric light. I heard laughter and song from within. From one of the windows a sparsely-built man leaned out, the head made familiar from the countless photographs and paintings I have seen.

And in a row, one almost touching the other, are the *palazzo* in which Richard Wagner lived, and the one in which Byron housed his amours with the terrible dark-haired woman who unwittingly avenged many of the wrongs done to the sister of Shelley's wife.

"There," my gondoliere again informed me, "lived a French lady writer, George Sand, and the

French poet Musset, with whom she had come here."

I leaned back and thought of the coincidence that had alined in one row the four stormy petrels, Sand, Wagner, Byron, and Annunzio.

"See, signor, there lived Desdemona; over there, a little below that mansion."

A strange man, my gondoliere.

"And perhaps a Shylock, too, lived somewhere in the neighborhood," I chided. "A Shylock and an Othello."

But my gondoliere did not seem taken aback.

"There is the palazzo of Signor Levi. One of the richest men in Venice, of one of the oldest of the Hebrew families, one of the first to have moved out of the ghetto. And Shylock was of their family," he informed me. A strange man, my gondoliere! He mixed the past with the present, fiction with reality, arranging things to suit his fancy; a true artist, not satisfied with copying and repeating. He spoke of the fiestas and carnivals as if they had taken place yesterday and not hundreds of years ago. He evoked them as if his memory were fresh with the sight, scent, and music of it all.

"Oh, Pablo!"

"My father had heard my grandmother tell the

story. . . . "

A fetid, decaying odor as of blood and flowers rose to my nostrils. I had already scented that before somewhere else—and in a flash I realized where. It was the same odor that rises out of the Bosporus and

permeates Constantinople at night. I then also realized the great similarity between Venice and Constantinople. I looked closer at the Venetian gondolieri. Their heads are Asiatic. There is a tinge of the Ethiopian in the lines of their faces and in the curl of their hair. Even the broad, sensual, cruel mouths strongly resemble those of Asiatics. Venice! Byzantium on the waters. And now I understand better the long struggle for supremacy between the two cities. Neither Huns nor Lombards nor the robbers of the Dalmatian coast have left such an impression on the people and its architecture, on the colors and the barbaric gorgeousness of its gilded façades, as the Moslems have. Venice is like a Christian replica of Constantinople.

The cruelty of Mustafa, who stuffed the skin of Bragadino and hoisted it on the masthead of his ship, was equaled only by the greater cruelty of Giustiniani. He avenged the great insult to Venice, after killing eighty thousand Turks, by slowly torturing the captives to death in the open squares, to the delight of men, women, and children, who remembered the deeds of the Turks at Cyprus.

Stepping out of the gondola, I went into the old Venetian ghetto. There is no living human vestige of those days. But stone and curve, what has never lived and what never dies, tell the story. How many waves of different civilizations have passed over Venice! The barbarians were followed by the French, the Spanish. the English, the Austrian, and

the Hungarian. Yet only what has really been akin to the blood of the people has left its imprint. To-day Venice looks like a slice of Constantinople, come on the wings of the wind to the Adriatic.

Across the Dogana Palace, where the lagoons merge with the sea, a large black boat anchored to the place is rising and falling on the dark waters. Under the canopy on one end of the boat sit the singers and a pianist. There are benches, on which sits the public. On both sides of the boat are black gondolas held close to one another by the *gondolieri* holding hands. The public sits on the boat and the gondolas and listens to a stout Italian singer shouting forth to the world "O sole mio" and other sentimental canzones.

A hundred feet away is another similar boat, but most of the singers on it are women, and among them is a beautiful Gipsy girl dressed in all the colors of the rainbow, singing passionately Russian Gipsy songs. Her voice rises above that of the tenor, rises so high above that the floating gondolas on the canal flock to the boat where she is singing and aline themselves on both sides of it until they stretch almost to the shore. From afar the two groups look like monstrous black birds that have swooped down on the water in search of prey. The gondolas beside the boat rise and fall, flapping like wings, wings studded with red and green and white which merge with the blue of the night.

A terrible feeling of loneliness took hold of me at

sight of the lovers in the boats. Venice, the city of lovers. They come here. Something attracts lovers to the City of Lagoons. Men and women from every country of the world. Turks, Englishmen, Italians, Egyptians. . . . Honeymooners, runaways, hiding in public. There is something in the atmosphere which loosens one's fiber, which makes him abandon himself in spite of himself to the poisonous incense of the emotions.

The feeling of loneliness became greater and stronger every minute. I left the canal to go to San Marco, where the numerous coffee-houses under the brilliantly lit arcades around the square beckoned.

What a different Venice from the Venice I had just seen! The outside tables were occupied by stout German matrons and loud Russians, who, with one hand in their long black hair, gesticulated in favor of something or other or against something or other. Heavy-browed Scandinavians looked morosely at glasses of black coffee. A few Americans had stretched their legs and leaned on their chairs, watching the smoke from their cigars.

What an international medley! And yet in all of them a sentimental look. All of them skeptical about Venice, all of them gripped by the sense of mystery and color, by the sound and the odors, by the very unnaturalness of a city on the water.

A dozen bands were playing at the same time. Half of them played jazz tunes.

I sat down at a table and felt very uneasy, as

if some one were looking at me from behind. I turned about to meet a pair of kind blue eyes in a rosy-colored elderly face. Gray hair came gently down over the ears from under a little green felt cap. She was English. She smiled at me.

"I have seen you in the old Moslem quarter," she told me, "and you didn't know that I followed you also in the ghetto. But so few people ever go

there that I wondered."

I was so glad to have some one to talk to, so glad to listen to a human voice addressed to me. I invited myself over to her table. She was only too glad to accept. She looked so kind and nice and elderly. Her well modulated voice rang pleasantly in my ears.

"Have you been here long?" I questioned.

"Oh, for some time! I am making some special studies."

"Oh!"

We talked about this and that, and an hour later I was ready to leave. I felt ashamed to have detained the dear old lady so long, and I told her so.

"Not at all," she assured me. "My day is only

beginning!"

And then she asked me to accompany her. She wanted to show me what was *most* interesting in Venice. We passed by the sign of the Two Towers where Petrarch lived. I pointed it out to her, but she didn't seem interested.

"You see, I am making a study of the tortures. I have been here two years, and studied every detail." She pressed herself closer to me. "There are wonderful things here. In Spain Napoleon demolished the Inquisition, and most of the implements of torture have disappeared. They are very difficult to reconstruct from descriptions. But here"-and her voice became more and more passionate—"I have found a complete torture-chamber in the ducal palace, with the carrucola, the pulley, in its original position. It stands just as it was when last used. It is wonderful! And what must have been going on in the cells under the Bridge of Sighs! A good deal of that is lost; I am sorry. It would have been interesting to know all their methods of putting to the question. There must have been wonderful things. I have obtained permission to go and visit these places at night. They don't mean anything in the daytime, but at night it is wonderful!" Her hand pressed mine more strongly. "Absolutely wonderful! I sit there for hours, dreaming. I can see it all happen again."

And she dragged me on to see with my own eyes what had delighted her so much. She urged me past the hushed narrow, dark streets, pointing out house after house, relating the story of each one.

"There, in this palace, the conspirators took hold of the spies, and they denied. Oh, but the things those people used, to extract from some one the truth! We will never know the half of it." And she complained bitterly, as if some valuable secret had been lost forever.

"Over there the Doge Marino Falieri was executed. I know, I have documents to prove that he was tortured before the execution." She dragged me on farther and farther, walking nervously beside me, going into courtyards and into dark alleys, pointing, pointing continually here, there, there. She was happy to have some one to talk to about what interested her most in life.

It was daylight when we returned to San Marco Square. The pigeons had already come out timidly and slowly from underneath the cornices. They were spreading themselves out low over the pavement in search of crumbs and grain, cooing and twittering. Then suddenly a hawk darted down like a bullet from the sky. With a cry the pigeons rose and flew back to their cornices, while the hawk rose with his victim.

The dear little blue-eyed lady who had talked so passionately about tortures and torture-chambers had fainted beside me because a hawk had killed a pigeon.



TOLEDO THE ADVENTURE



"SHE MET ME ONE NIGHT ON THE BRIDGE"

TOLEDO

THE ADVENTURE

To see Toledo during the day only is not to see Toledo at all. The Cook cars, the tourist cars, rumbling through the hilly streets; the noise of the megaphone echoing through the curiously winding streets that serpentine through the town, coiling and recoiling in sudden twists, the shops from which are offered all sorts of cheap vulgar imitations of what was once Toledo's great pride—daggers of bronze incrusted with mother-of-pearl, of silver incrusted with black enamel—all this makes of Toledo a vulgar corner of some charity bazaar.

But at night, after the last key has turned in the last rusty lock and the last rattling shutter of the shops has been pulled down, Toledo awakens as it was five hundred years ago, as it was twelve hundred years ago when wild Musa brought Mohammedanism to Spain. With the last vestige of the day, vulgarity and all the imitations of Europeanism disappear; Toledo is drawn back again upon its own sands and rock, like an island that has floated away from the place where it once stood and has

become more than a stranger in strange surroundings. No country is so far away from Europe as is Spain. And of all Spanish cities no city is so far away as Toledo. Less than twenty hours' journey from Paris one plunges twenty centuries back—back into a different civilization which has been shaken but not shattered, which has been overcluttered but not smothered, changed but not unmade. Toledo! Toledo the mysterious, the beautiful; where the desert meets the mountains in an embrace of eternity.

Once away from the few main streets of the city, fifty feet away from the Gate of San Martín, one is immersed in darkness. There are no street lights, or they are so far apart that, looking back from the bottom of a street, one gets the impression the dimly burning street-lamp at a distance is but a star that has come a little nearer to earth.

One stumbles and falls frequently over the irregular cobblestones and the twisted sidewalks with sharp stones at the edge. From afar one hears weird sounds of guitars and low wailing of songs one never hears in the daytime. For this too one should remember about Toledo: at night, when the others have gone—for, because of its nearness to Madrid, tourists seldom stay overnight—the Toledans can be as they are, can sing the songs they want to sing, and live as they would like to live.

From a house between the towers of two chapels, white tiled, with a grayish roof, like a smaller stone between two larger ones of a precious diadem, I

hear a song more Moorish than any song of Moors I ever heard. Even the twang of the guitar does not overcome the African quality it has—for this too must be said: that dance which is known the world over as the Spanish rhythm is borrowed from the French and the Italians. It is why we have not had more Spanish music until now. Modern Spanish composers are beginning to shake off the foreign yoke under which they have worked.

As the eve accustoms itself and begins to distinguish things, while the feet adjust themselves to the unevenness of the pavement, Toledo breathes again. It is as if one were suddenly to discover a casket full of jewels in the night, a casket full of rubies and smaragds, topazes and opals, pearls and diamonds. It is as if they were seen in the dim dark -with only the feel of the red and the sea-blues and the playing fires of the opals, the lusciousness of the pearls, and the glittering coldness of the diamonds; dimmed color and flame leaping suddenly into the dark. The Puerta Visagra, grim and cold stone, and from there to the left, like a marble thrown away by a capricious child upon rocks, stands the church of Cristo de la Luz. Through that gate the Cid rode almost a thousand years ago. Through the narrow slits of the same houses that I see now, houses with their backs turned toward the street like children who have been punished at school, the women had watched his passing. From the same houses of stone and mud they must have seen him pass on his

fiery black horse. There, to the right, the mosque to which he went, the mosque from which he made his first attempt against the Arab. How Musa must have been overjoyed to avenge that insult three hundred years later! There the mosque; you go into it through heavy, gracefully rounded double arches. At the light of the moon, which sheds its silver upon the entrance, are the arabesques and the traceries on the walls which have not been destroyed by the brutal hands of conquerors and time. How different this mosque from the church! How out of place the Germanic style! As if one were suddenly to hear a tomtom accompanying the delicate music of violins and harps.

There, a little above the level of the eyes, are the churches of San Juan, of San Vicente, of Santo Tomé; churches for which El Greco, that mad painter, the Levantine with the pathetic soul, came to Spain no one knows how or why, with Greek and Jewish blood in his veins, with a hundred other bloods surging within him, distorting everything, and yet giving to everything that unusualness which marks the work of genius. It is still the same Toledo. If a new El Greco should be born in another hundred years he would find no other place to go to.

Jewels strewn over rocks and boulders; for even the bridge across the Tagus, the Puente de Alcántara, looks like a precious lock over a river of diamonds on the somber hand of Heaven.

Down below, near the ferry, are the poorest of

the poor, living in a misery unknown to any other people but Spaniards, while up to the knees in filth, in slime, they can look up to the great cathedral, or at the Alcázar, which lies voluptuously like a reclining woman high above it.

It is a city of fortresses, of chapel roofs and curly spires. A city in which two worlds have battled to improve two conceptions of life, of the here and hereafter, and where the conqueror left far less imprint than the defeated. For while the Moors and the Jews were driven out of Toledo hundreds of years ago, there is nothing more Moorish, nothing more Jewish, than Toledo. You can see in one hour more Moorish faces in Toledo going to church than you can ever see anywhere else in ten times that many hours going to the mosque. You can see more typical Jewish faces among the clergy of the cathedral than you can see in ten conclaves of rabbis in Palestine. The other blood in Spain has thinned out and evaporated. The thick Moorish and Jewish blood still flows like heavy wine, in the veins of the people.

And now the Judería, still known as such, the Jewish district, though there are legally and officially no Jews left in Spain. The deserted, narrow, winding streets sloping gently this way and that. Stone walls rocking in prayer: the gesture of Jew and Moor under emotional stress. The alley entrances to the houses are narrower than those to the houses in the other parts of the town. These alleys

must have been purposely made so, for better defense against invasions. Two men abreast can hardly squeeze through. How much blood must have flowed in the courtyards of the squares around which the houses are formed when they came to convert the inhabitants to the Lamb of God!

The synagogues still stand where they have always been: one modestly, the other a little more elegant, jutting out its body as if in defense of the more modest one. The style is Arabic and the columns are Byzantine. Running friezes suggest the beginning of styles which have never been carried out. The whole thing is a little too squat, bow-legged, as it were, even stooping a little, though the head strives to stand high.

Standing against the blue darkness, the building is a silent defiance to the wisdom of time and to other wisdoms. How strong the friendly Arab must have been to these Jews! They accepted his culture. Merchants, statesmen, and artists, builders; for they were in every walk of life while the Arab was there and for many years after the Christian invasion.

How fitting that one should see the house of Samuel Levy, treasurer to the king, at night! It was from this house that the tragic old man was dragged at night to the cellars of the Inquisition, where he was tortured to abjure his religion. And what example he gave to his friends! What must have been his thoughts as he was dragged along by the black-masked men through the streets! For he

must have known what awaited him, Samuel. Others had been dragged like that before him from the adjoining house. He must have heard their cries. And there out of that window his people had looked upon his departing shadow. And how he too must have called out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

I wandered about the streets of the Judería without looking right or left, without looking before me, stumbling against sudden twists, stopped by blind alleys. I let myself be pervaded by all the sinister and deep music of what once was. There in the Judería, and in other ones likewise, I have lived ages and ages. Abraham ibn Ezra, Gabirol and Ibn Daud and Judah ha Levi lived there; the same Judah ha Levi who, after having sung so many songs about Palestine, went there and was killed by the stupid lance of an Arab as soon as he touched holy ground. What sin had he committed? What doubts had he had that like Moses he should not have been allowed to set foot in Canaan?

There always have been Jews in what is now known as Spain. They probably came there with the Greeks and Phenicians. They must have been there long before the Arabs, spread over Arabic Spain, in Seville, in Córdoba and Granada.

In one of these houses was the great School of Learning, the first academy of Europe. Greek science intertwined with Jewish wisdom and Arab logic; astronomy, astrology, and chemistry. Learning was supreme. Even the tradesman came to refresh his soul at night after the day's work was done. The Jews brought many signs and symbols to Spain which spread from there over all of Europe. While the rest of the world was still in the grip of cruel barbarians, Jewish culture was spreading like oil over turbulent waters; a floating bridge of wisdom uniting Asia, Africa, and Europe.

And then the end of the fourteenth century. The end of a world in the discovery of a new one. Columbus had discovered one. Arab culture lost one. The eternal balancing of things. What had not been destroyed, what had not been killed, those who had refused to be swallowed up, had to leave home, mezquita, synagogue, and academy; in an exodus such as has never been known since, they left everything behind them.

As I am passing out of the gate to the Judería I see the phantoms of ghosts passing out before me. It must have been on a night like that, balmy, starry, with a full moon, a larger moon than I have ever seen looking down upon the woes of the world, that they went out. Their phantoms are still here.

The streets are deserted save for an occasional young lover talking to his *novia* through the barred windows. One sings to his beloved a soft song, accompanying himself gently with his guitar. As I walk farther toward the bridge and out to the poorer quarters the movement increases. There are even children on the street. Love-making is less discreet.

The lovers are much younger than in the "better" quarters. There are doubtful women in the alleyways. Doubtful women and doubtful men crossing from one side of the street to the other. And still all is much quieter than the poorest district of many another city. One can still hear the precious soft sound of the Tagus, the river poetic, and the sound of the wind in the rocks at a distance.

A young man follows me and offers to sell me a watch he has just found. "It is of gold," he assures me, "gold." When he has gone another one offers me an enameled dagger, a third one a diamond ring. I am evidently not the only stranger that has passed through these streets at night.

I ask one of the rascals who, not having succeeded in selling anything, begs me for a cigarette: "Do many strangers pass through here at night?"

"Not so many now," he says, blowing the smoke in my face. "There used to be many more, but last summer one of them was found dead. And so now they are afraid." He glances at two of his companions who were looking at us while we were talking. When they saw me give him a cigarette they also ask for fags. They watch me closely to see the effect his tale has had on me. After a brief silence the younger one inquires:

"And from where does the señor come?"

"From America, can't you see, you fool?" the older one interposes with disgust, and points to my shoes.

NIGHTS ABROAD

I leave the trio without refusing a dozen things offered in rapid succession. But one follows me.

"Does the señor want to see a gitana dance? I know where; give me a peseta and I will show you the way."

"Are there many Gipsies around here?" I asked. "Have they not all gone to the feria of Seville?"

And so the older one cried to the other ones: "We shall all have to leave Toledo soon. There are too many books written about this city. A young lady yesterday, coming from far off, proved to me that she knew more about Toledo than I did—than we all do!"

"Another cigarette, señor?"

"No; buenas noches."

I leaned over the *puente*, the bridge, and gazed into the turbulent waters. A few minutes later I was aware of some one, not fifty feet from me, doing likewise. I turned my head. A black figure straightened out and walked ahead. I could see by the slow pace that she expected me to follow. What gracious movement, what rhythmic walk! She was tall and lean and straight. She stopped again and leaned over the wall of the bridge. A few seconds later she turned her head. A perfect oval pale face emerged from under a black shawl that covered part of her forehead and gave her a nun-like appearance. I should never have thought one could see so distinctly at such a distance. She looked at me, sighed deeply, and straightened herself out again. She

walked a few more steps and stopped. I remained where I was, looking after her, wishing she would forever walk back and forth, so graceful were her movements, so rhythmic her steps. She stopped at the middle of the bridge and turned, coming toward me. She was dressed all in black, simply, elegantly; her face and her hands like chiseled-out lustrous silver. Her big black eyes looked at me. I felt as if the whole world had suddenly begun to sing a soft song, and yet underneath this I was aware of a fear, a vague fear I had never experienced before.

When she was abreast of me, though I had fully turned around with my back against the bridge, she did not stop to talk to me. She slowed up her pace for just a brief second and sighed deeply before she walked away. I watched her disappear at the end

of the bridge.

A few minutes later an old bent Gipsy woman, with a face so worn and seamed it looked inhuman, approached me leaning heavily on a stick.

"That the señor should let me tell his fortune." I refused. "But, señor, I will tell your fortune for

a small silver piece."

"No."

"I will tell it to you for a copper piece."

"No."

"I will tell it to you for nothing," and she grabbed my hand. "I must tell you your fortune. You should know that good fortune awaits you, señor."

I could not pull my hand out of hers.

"Señor, there is a doña, a beautiful doña, who sighs after you. Señor, she is dying because of you. Señor, she is not far from here now."

"Mother," I asked, "has she sent you to me?"

"I mustn't tell you that"; the old Gipsy woman looked half scared. "She is the owner of the house at the end of the bridge. She is rich! And she is beautiful. Oh, señor, you are so lucky to have attracted her attention. She is a widow. Why, a hundred young men of the richest in Toledo would consider themselves happy if she but looked at them. Señor, what should I tell her?"

It seemed to me that the Tagus had suddenly grown wilder and noisier, that the Tagus had speech.

The Tagus River was angry. The splashing of the waves on the rocks under the bridge seemed to say: "No! No! No!" And yet everything else seemed to have conspired to enmesh me in emotions over which I had no control.

But my eyes saw the turrets and roofs of churches and cathedrals, of mosques and *alcázares*, all turned into odors, voluptuous odors, voluptuous scents of jasmine and lemon blossoms, of narcissus and roses. Even the sounds of the distant guitars became pervading odors.

The old Gipsy was still holding my hand and waiting for my answer.

"Shall I lead you there? Shall I lead you to her, señor? She is waiting for you."

And the Tagus said: "No! No! No!"

I pulled my hand out of the Gipsy woman's grip and walked away from her. She was after me pulling at my coat. She was angrily pulling at my coat.

"Don't run away, señor; don't run away! Go this way." She tried to turn me around in the direction

where the woman in black had disappeared.

But I ran away as fast as my feet could carry me. My ears rang with the words of the Gipsy woman and the answer of the Tagus; I was really running away from myself. It seemed to me I was living through dreams in which one wants to run from something but cannot. All the odors of Toledo were pulling me back!

Behind me I heard the old Gipsy woman coming after me, marking her steps with her heavy cane.

"One more minute, señor."

At the end of the bridge I retraced my steps to go back to my hotel. I had to pass the old Gipsy woman again. She hung on to me. At the entrance the tall woman in black was leaning against the pillar. She looked at me and sighed. For a brief moment I stopped to look at her. She moved toward me. But again the river said, "No!"

When twenty feet away from her I heard her call after me:

"Estúpido!"

An hour later the bell-boy of the hotel knocked at my door:

"There is a doña downstairs who wants to speak to you."

I shut the door in his face.

The sudden onrush of day filled my room. I could not sleep. Estúpido indeed.

I was on my way to Madrid on the earliest train.

A few months later, late one night in a Parisian café, my friend C——, who had just returned from Spain, told me of the most extraordinary thing that had happened in his life.

"Fancy, in Toledo a beautiful Spanish woman fell in love with me—passionately in love with me. She met me on the bridge over the Tagus one night. Magnificent woman, tall, willowy, all in black."

"And a Gipsy woman insisted on telling your fortune?" I interrupted, the whole thing suddenly clear before me

"Yes, but how do you know?"

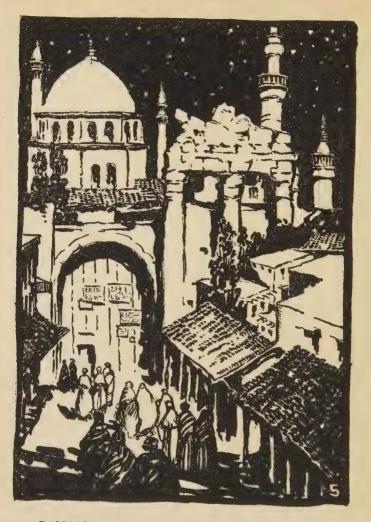
I disliked to destroy his illusion.

"I'm a bit of a fortune-teller, you know."

"But in the morning," C—— continued, "there was some noise outside the door, and I jumped from the window. When I had finally got to the hotel I discovered my wallet had fallen out of my pocket; must have fallen out of my pocket as I jumped through the window, you see? I had just enough small change to reach Madrid. Oh, but what an adventure!"

I looked at him and thought of the story the three rascals had told me about the man who had been found dead. I wondered whether the other one had also had a similar wonderful adventure.

DAMASCUS COBWEBS AND DIRT



DAMASCUS HAS ITS FAMOUS MAIN STREET

DAMASCUS

COBWEBS AND DIRT

PAUL saw the light at the Gate of Sharki. An old Moslem whose white turban told that he had been to Mecca and was a holy man, pointed at a heap of stones in front of which at a certain time of the year a cross of light forms itself to commemorate the day on which the change of heart had taken place within the man who had so bitterly persecuted the followers of the Nazarene. Should I desire to wait only a few days, living in his house, I would see a cross of shadows at exactly the same place, which commemorates the day on which Paul died or was killed for the faith he was then sponsoring. Whichever way Paul had come, whichever way he had traveled, whether he passed through the white towns of Jiljulieh, Nablus, or El Afule, or through the olive green mountains of Samaria, he must have seen the same sights I had seen. The same sweet odors must have moistened his lips and brought tears to his eyes. What are two thousand years to these old desert towns and villages built around little squares so many thousands of years ago that a few

more or less don't count? A few modern buildings and the Hejaz Railway had made no impression of modernity upon the age-long structure of the old, and they looked so flimsy there was no doubt in my mind that their existence would be only temporary; that a wind or a desert uprising would blow away everything not embedded deep under the sand and the granite of a thousand of years. And there is rock under the sand.

The "Pearl of the Desert" the Arabs call Damascus, and the name is well chosen. The thousand and one domes of mosques, the towers and spires around which cluster, like grapes, white-painted houses surrounded by orchards and gardens, seem like so many necklaces of pearls, one within another, rippling out to the ancient walls that circle the city. The not-too-distant Mediterranean softens the dry, harsh air blown from the desert. At night the blue sky is divided in two: golden from the reflection of the yellow sands of the desert and deep blue where the sea mirrors itself.

The Pharaonic founders of Damascus must have had a vision when they looked down from the heights of the Gebal Salahiya on the Anti-Lebanon into the valley in which the city is now set. Builders with vision, those Pharaohs! Looking down from the heights, they knew how a city of white towers and housetops would look when surrounded by green fields and orchards and gardens and woods. The "Pearl of the Desert" indeed; a pearl set in emer-

alds! Damascus, jewel of the great cities of the world! Pity who has not seen her. Scorn who does not love her.

No wonder so many greedy hands have stretched forth to seize her. No wonder so many greedy hands have stretched out to snatch at her. Those hands have withered long ago, yet the Barada River still flows peacefully to the northeast of the city and criss-crosses Damascus in a thousand and one channels that feed the homes and the gardens. The peaceful garden folks have known how to defend their city. Califs were the best sword-makers. The Ommiads used every spare minute after their day's labor to beat the iron into sharp, hard steel upon the little anvils stuck in the ground in front of their homes. For it was they, the Damascenes, who discovered steel. They were the first ones who knew how to harden iron to a point of brittleness, and to this day a Damascene blade can easily compete with the best made anywhere in the world. Touch a Damascene blade and you touch life itself-proud life, resilient life that comes back to its original line or breaks.

I had reached the heart of the city after nightfall when most of the bazaars had been closed. And so I went to one of the cafés beside the Barada River to join a friend in the smoking of a water-pipe. We were alone for a while, but soon people began to come from all directions; from the homes and the gardens and the orchards and the bazaars. Syrians

and Jews, Turks, desert Arabs, Levantines, some leading their donkeys and others astride their camels, in garb of all colors and all hues, not one of them in any hurry, with measured steps and dignified bearing sat down on low divans on the porches of cafés. There were more than a hundred people, but it was quiet, for even the orders to the waiters were being given not above a whisper and sometimes with only a sign of the fingers.

Soon the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard in the distance. All eyes turned to the east. From a bend of the road the rider appeared upon a black and glistening stallion, running so fast I expected him to pass as rapidly as the wind. Yet, while still in full gallop, the horse was reined in, the hind legs glided for a foothold, the forelegs rose high, and by the time the animal had come back to a standing position the rider had jumped off and left it quivering in the middle of the road. When the white desert face-shawl had been thrown back, I saw a pale, dark face framed by a white beard. The man was at least sixty years old but his movements and his actions were those of a boy of twenty. Without answering the greetings of the people, he looked rapidly to the right and to the left, examining the faces of everybody. As his eyes rested a little longer on me, I couldn't withstand the burning gaze. I saw a pearl-set handle of a dagger resting obliquely in the Arabic sash-belt underneath the ample white cloak. A moment later the rider was gone, galloping away at the same speed at which he had arrived.

"Who is it?" I asked my friend.

"Mechmet Fuedin, a desert sheik, hunting an enemy. I should like to be there when he finds him. For I have no doubt the enemy is a worthy specimen and would give a good account of himself. Fuedin would not honor some nincompoop with his enmity, I am certain of that."

I wanted to know more, but neither my friend nor anybody else seemed able or willing to give any information as to what had caused the quarrel between the two men.

A little later, as the evening advanced, ladies of the harems, conducted by eunuchs carrying lanterns and heavy sticks in their hands, passed in front of the cafés. The women, abusing the privileges of their veils, stopped to look at us, whispering to one another, laughing out loud, until hurried away by their guardians.

Not a lamp and not a light anywhere. The whole city was bathed in the sweetly scented blue, long summer twilight.

Passing through the roofed "Straight" Street which runs across the city, I reached the Umayad mosque when it was almost deserted. The Umayad had been a heathen temple once, a Christian church several times, and had become a mosque again in the eighth century when it passed definitely into

Mohammedan hands. Its spacious courtyards, its immense and heavy bronze doors, and the architectural styles superimposed upon one another give it the appearance of the bulwark of man against time.

Soon the muezzin climbed his tower to call the faithful to the second evening prayers. From the crowded streets encircling the mosque I heard the flip-flap noise of heelless papushes upon the hard pavement, and, mingling with that noise, the clatter of horse-hoofs. Fuedin was coming to pray. The horse veered and turned around before the huge bronze door that was being thrown open. Fuedin dismounted and, climbing up quickly the few steps leading to the door, he surveyed in a rapid glance the people that were pouring in. Never before had I seen such dignified attitude in a man! Never before had I seen a humbler man than this old Arab. who with youthful movements discarded his shoes at the door to put his feet into the wooden slippers in which one enters a mosque. Sitting down in the remotest corner, upon one of the rich-colored rugs that covered the floor of the mosque, right back of the Tomb of St. John the Baptist, Fuedin touched the floor several times with his forehead, and, closing his eyes after crossing his arms on his chest, his lips mumbled inaudible prayer while the seated Mohammedan priest was reciting in a nasal tone from the Holy Book.

The mosque continued to fill with people coming

in noiselessly and seating themselves on the rugs of the floor to the right and to the left, leaving a passageway in the middle. I looked at the high ceiling and at the colored marble columns, examined the painted dome, and tried to follow the meaning of the chant of the priest from the accent and intonation. His voice was as colorless as the Arabic script decorations on the golden walls and as uniform as the desert itself.

From time to time my eye stole a glance at Fuedin. He hadn't changed his position nor had he moved an inch. His eyes were closed. His lips mumbled. His arms were crossed over his chest.

The services lasted only a little over a half-hour. Though every one had left by that time, the Arab was still sitting in the same place; either because he had not noticed that the services were over or because he was unwilling to go. The priest sat down and waited; his faith forbidding him to leave the mosque while a man prayed.

Suddenly the patient stallion outside neighed. In the twinkling of an eye Fuedin was on his feet. A half-dozen long strides took him through the door of the mosque. He was on his horse and away before

I had actually realized what had happened.

Preceded by a man carrying a lantern, for the streets of Damascus are never lit, I reached my home at the west end of "Straight" Street. My atabeh, my room, was under the roof. The floor of the far end was raised two feet higher than the front part.

The night was unbearably hot. When I closed the two small windows I was stifled. When I opened them a swarm of insects invaded the room. The cold water I had had brought to me was tepid, murky, and undrinkable. The black coffee I had drunk made me fidgety. Sleep was impossible, and I was very tired. I was ready to go out again, when my host bowed himself in.

"Fuedin wants to see you. He is a guest of my house." My host and he had weighed carefully the question whether he should come up to my room, honoring me because I was a stranger, or I should be asked to come to him because of his age. The question involved many niceties of etiquette and tradition. Finally they had come to the happy conclusion to let me decide on the procedure of our meeting. I quickly decided to honor his age and accompanied my host.

The door was open. Fuedin sat on the low divan along the wall. He was peacefully smoking the water-pipe, but upon seeing me, he rose to his feet quickly. I was again vividly impressed by the contrast between his face and the youthfulness of his movements.

"You are my guest," he said simply, and made place for me beside him on the divan after placing an extra cushion behind my back, against the wall. The inn-keeper withdrew, walking backward, making profound salaams.

The water-pipe had two mouth-pieces, and so

Fuedin and I blew the smoke in the air without saying a word. Finally he broke the silence.

"I have seen you near the Barada River and have seen you again at the mosque. These are the only times I have seen you. Tell me, have you seen me more often than that?"

I told him that I had not.

"Then my eyes are still good," he reflected loudly. "It is the reason I had wanted to talk to you; to see whether your eyes are better or quicker than mine. Never before had it taken me so long to find an enemy. So I wondered whether my eyes were still as good as they had been. To-night my horse neighed twice. I know, therefore, that my enemy is somewhere in the neighborhood, and yet when I came out I did not see him. Allah have mercy on me!"

"A stallion neighs for a good many reasons," I said slowly, commanding with difficulty the little Arabic I knew.

"That be so."

"But who is he that is so worthy of your enmity?" I inquired.

"You understand the soul of an Arab better than you speak his tongue," Fuedin complimented me. "His father had been the enemy of my father. His grandfather the enemy of my grandfather. Ten generations past this enmity has existed. We have raided one another's villages. We have taken captive one another's women. And at the market of Aleppo we

have sold the horses and the slaves we had taken from these raids. This enmity has kept our swords sharp, our eyes far-seeing, and our horses fast. But never have we soiled one another's houses. Never have we spoken ill of one another. Ours was the enmity of the body and not of the soul, until this last son of his father! Oh, the worthy enemies my ancestors have had until this wine-drinking swine! We have fought almost side by side alongside the Ingleze against the common enemy, the Turk. And because he and his men are as brave as my men, we have swept the desert clean. To have sold my brothers into slavery if he had caught them in a raid, or have added my sisters to his harem, would not have been as insulting as what he has done. He has insulted me! He has crippled the brother of my stallion. He has gelded him, and rides him now over the desert, mocking me and telling to people that the seed of my horses is no longer worthy of perpetuation."

Never before had I seen such anger in a man. Never before had I seen a man so aroused, so deeply moved.

"It is why my stallion has neighed to-day. The wind must have brought the odor of his brother to his nostrils."

After a while, I said in an attempt to pacify my host: "But this is an old, old quarrel, Fuedin. Somewhere in the Koran there is something said about the brave man's and the good man's forgetfulness of

the evil deeds done by his neighbors and his enemies."

"Yes, something is said. If I am right the words are, 'Forget old quarrels.'"

"But isn't your grief an old one?" I inquired.
My host rose to his feet and, putting his arm
around me, he led the way to a promontory from
where we could see the whole city under our feet in
the clear blue of the starlit Damascus sky.

"To the right is the high dome of a green mosque. Do you see it?"

"I do."

"A little farther to the left is another dome. The color is a little lighter and it is not as high. Can you see it? It is there between the two spires."

"I do see it, Fuedin."

"The first one is called the Old Mosque, and the second one is called the New Mosque. And the New one is a thousand years old. Mohammed was a desert Arab. And when he spoke of old griefs . . ."

We walked silently back side by side to our atabehs, and after we had passed the tomb of Saladin, the hero of the Saracens, Fuedin pointed out to me the tomb of Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed, lying in dignified loneliness at the end of the Meidan. "These things happened but yesterday. We Arabs count time in centuries and not in days."

Back at our inn Fuedin returned my visit by coming for a few minutes into my room. It was long past midnight. The room was thick with insects.

NIGHTS ABROAD

They had clustered around the corner of the beams of the ceiling and buzzed out swarming by the thousands. Seizing a Gipsy broom standing against the wall, I dipped into a corner made by two joints of beams to clean out a nest of wasps and spiders. Fuedin grasped my arm.

"Don't!" he cried.

"Why?"

"The age-long dirt and dust laid in between these beams hold them together."

And catching himself as if he had said more than he had intended to, Fuedin added: "That you should understand the soul of the Arab better than you can speak his tongue and still understand so little!" And he left the room without wishing me good night.

From afar, the muezzin was calling the faithful to prayer again. The tinkling of the camel's bells was awakening the early-rising city to its labors. Damascus was awake again. Night had merged with day. A horse neighed. A moment later Fuedin was galloping away to the echo of the clatter of his stallion's hoofs upon the pavement of the roofed street.

MONTE CARLO THE FAITH OF MEN



THE CASINO GARDENS OFFER SOME SOLACE

MONTE CARLO

THE FAITH OF MEN

I нар had dinner with Blasco Ibáñez at his villa in Mentone, near the Italian border. I know of no man more entertaining than was the Spanish author. He spoke not only with his lips; his hands and arms and knees and neck and head joined the conversation. It was full of dialogue; for he was continually repeating what some one else had said, and imitating the gestures and the voice—whether man or woman. And when mimicry demanded that he should rise to his feet, the soup spilled over his shirt-front, and the spoon was used as a dagger, as a stick, as a bow, or as a pencil. Though spick and span whenever he appeared before strangers, he had to change his clothes a half-hour later if other visitors were announced or if he intended to go out.

His French was only a little less impossible than his English. He butchered every language, stabbing it full of holes and filling them with Spanish words, expecting his listeners to understand not only what he said, but the nuances, gradations, and shades of the most complicated narrative. In Nice a French writer had warned me—Anatole France had said to him: "There are two great joys one can experience while being together with Ibáñez; one is to get him to talk and the other is to expect him to stop. He is not a man, he is a torrent."

Ibáñez was telling me how he was pestered daily by refugees who made all kinds of impossible propositions and wound up generally by asking for a more or less considerable loan.

"Don't come to live at Mentone. Life would be impossible for you. I am going to play these borrowers of Mentone a trick. I am going to give away the villa for poor writers to live in. Penniless writers! Merit is not going to be judged by their literary accomplishments in the past but by their poverty. Let these Russian princes try to borrow money from them. Hah! They expect I will sell it to some rich American. No, they have poisoned my life! I shall give the villa away. Only an hour ago a Russian prince burst into my studio. I could not rid myself of him before I had given him fifty francs. He asked for fifty thousand, but he accepted fifty. Dios! What a crew! Dios! Dios!"

As I had mentioned that I intended to go that evening to Monte Carlo, the chauffeur appeared after our liqueurs and announced that the car was ready.

"But I have my own," I protested.

"I am going with you," Ibáñez explained. "Your

chauffeur will sleep here to-night. Don't worry about him, he has been attended to." I wondered when these orders had been given. Except for a few moments with his secretary, Ibáñez had been with me all the time. Well, he had taken me in hand. He was managing me that evening.

Though no orders were given to the chauffeur, he took the direction to Monte Carlo. As we rolled on at top speed over the highroad winding around the mountain, sliding abruptly around sharp corners, my host was pointing out the houses and the cliffs and telling their stories and their histories. "That Roman column sticking out from between the two hills: look at it. The historians are fools. They have no imagination. I will write a novel around that Roman column—and, guessing, come far nearer the truth than the scientists ever will.

"There on this side is a house occupied by an English painter. And his wife—oh, I do hope you meet her.

"Some Americans live on the other side. They come here every year—mother and daughter. They come to visit me. I never understand what they say. I don't know their names, but they become more familiar with me after every visit. The last time they visited me they offered their cheeks to be kissed, as if they were old acquaintances. My wife came in, and fancy not being able to introduce to your wife women whose cheeks you have kissed! And so I said in Spanish, 'These are crazy Americans.' And

my wife understood and shook hands warmly with them. And they were so happy. Dios!"

Truly he was a torrent and not a man. I was weary and tired listening to him, weary and tired laughing at his quips and his jokes and his tales. And yet I was thirsty for more. He was inexhaustible.

Suddenly the car slid into a narrow street that seemed to have grown out of the mountain. Though it was two hours into the night, things and people outlined themselves so sharply against the blue horizon I wondered whether the night had only just begun there.

Ibáñez stopped talking, pulled out a wallet from his pocket, took from it a few bills, and grew very serious. "I have forgotten," he said, "that I never take more than a thousand francs when I go to Monte Carlo. But I shall leave the rest with the chauffeur. If you intend to play, it is better to do the same."

He switched off to another tale. Writers had never had any luck at the table. Actresses, singers, acrobats, and painters were luckier. They win money. Writers never do. The gods don't want them to get money easily.

The car stopped in front of the Casino. How peaceful the square was! The columned building with its high portals and large windows looked more like a municipal palace than the official gamblinghouse of the world. Men and women in full dress,

black silk top-hats and white gloves, low décolletées and bare heads, passed in and out rapidly.

We put our names and addresses down on the register. Ibáñez had a member's card, I paid a few francs entrance fee, and we were ushered in. I shall never forget the faces around the gaming-tables! The impassive faces of the men calling out the winning numbers as they followed the rolling balls, which, starting very swiftly, slowed up going in and out of holes. The "ahs" and "ohs," and the little screams of joy and disappointment of the players! I shall never forget how the faces of women hardened under my very eyes. Not one looked the same five minutes after she had approached a gamingtable. Win or lose, their faces didn't relax. Their faces twitched, their bodies twisted themselves. Their spread-out clawlike fingers were ready to grasp the chips thrown to them when they won, or to grab back the chips taken away when they lost. What bad losers women were!

Watching them, I had completely forgotten my host. Five minutes later he tapped me on the shoulder. "I told you writers have no luck." And seeing no chips before me, he said, "Well, let's go away."

I was ashamed to tell him that I had forgotten

to play.

From that room we passed to another one and from there to still another, until we reached the baccarat-tables, where thousands of dollars passed hands in a few minutes. I wanted to stay, but

Ibáñez didn't let me. "No, no, no! You will play." And leaning over, he said, "In the dancing-room is a beautiful young lady, a professional dancer." And he winked both his eyes at once. "Let's watch her. I am going to put her in my next novel. She knows it; so whenever I come she strikes a different pose. She is now probably living mentally the novel that she thinks I intend to write. But it is not that at all. I am going to write something entirely different. All the women I have known have always expected to be the heroines of my next novel. And they were, but they never recognized themselves."

I knew he was talking to keep me away from the baccarat-table. He was managing me. Nothing amused him so much as the word "manager." Ah, in America everybody had a manager. Here we hire secretaries. There you hire your own master. Manager.

agers! Ha, ha!

The dancer came to greet us. She acted as if she were very tired; not physically, just tired of life in general. Ibáñez introduced her: "The heroine of my next novel. Don't steal her away from me. I mean, don't put her in your novel. She is wonderful. My discovery."

When she had left our table he explained: "Tonight she thinks she is a mother who has to support her child; and because of that, she has to appear gay and jolly, and dance with everybody. Of course, she is no mother and has no child. I tell you that that 'Pagliacci' theme has ruined more gay actresses than anything in this world. Ah, the fools! Whenever you meet an actress ask her if she has seen 'Pagliacci.' If she has, never talk to her again. She will lie, lie, lie, ten thousand times as much as any other actress would; and actresses already lie a thousand times more than any other women. I know. I know. Dios! Dios!"

"Ssh-she may hear you, Don Ibáñez."

"Hear me! Actresses never hear anything but talk about themselves."

Talking and tugging at my arm and gesticulating, he led me out of the Casino. "I don't like the way they play here," he said. And suddenly he explained: "Ah, you think you in America are the only ones to have secret pleasures. Drinking against the law, he, he! Come, and I will show you. But I must explain that officially this is the only gambling-place in Monte Carlo; also that no inhabitant of Monte Carlo is allowed in the Casino. If you take up residence here, you cannot play any more."

He whispered something to the chauffeur. He took fresh money out of his wallet and put it into his pocket. The car stopped at the corner of a narrow street beyond the park. The two of us got out and walked a distance of more than three blocks. A woman stepped out from a hallway and said, "Ici!" A few steps farther an old man saluted us and repeated the word, "Ici!" And so five or six people along the street accosted us with the same word.

Ibáñez stopped in front of a dark house. Not a

window was lit. He tapped at the door. After what seemed considerable time, a panel slid open; two eves looked out, then the heavy door opened noiselessly and we were in a dark hallway. At a door on the third floor another panel slid open, the lights were turned on, and we were ushered into another room, where our coats were taken. We were literally pushed into a large hall lit by candles and kerosene lamps, where a hundred or more men sat around roulette-tables. But the faces of these men had an entirely different light in them from the faces of the people of the Casino. Every time the door opened, people turned their heads away from the table to inspect the new guest. One could hear their hearts beat whenever there was the slightest noise outside. When one raised his voice it was hushed down by the looks in the eyes of the others. The ball rolled softly, and the men who called out the numbers did so in a voice just a little above a whisper.

"Why don't they use electricity?" I asked my host.

"Because the electric company would denounce them to the authorities," he explained.

Five minutes later we had both lost our money. We were ushered out as silently as we had come in. As we walked down the street not one of the figures that had invited us to come inside paid any attention to us.

Ibáñez was exulting. "Did you see them? Ah, these people here have discovered the great secret!

People don't come to Monte Carlo to win money only. They come to court danger. Europe doesn't know how many wars Monte Carlo has averted by giving the princes and kings and ministers and generals an outlet. Danger, danger! That is what we want. Monte Carlo is the kingdom of danger!"

"And who are the people gambling there?" I asked. "Monacans?"

"Not one of them," Ibáñez explained. "Refined, super-refined Americans and Englishmen and Frenchmen. People who know how to get more for their money than the imbeciles going to the Casino."

I was thinking. "What was I doing there? Had not I been courting danger? Had I ever felt a greater thrill on the brink of some precipice? Had I ever been happier than when hanging on the lips of those whose 'Yes' or 'No' was not certain?"

"And why haven't we gone into the other places where we were called?" I asked.

"Uninteresting," Ibáñez informed me, "for there the Monacans gamble; and they do it only for money. Speak-easies—isn't that what you call them in your own country? What a name! Wonderful! Wonderful! Impossible to translate into another language. Managers. Speak-easies. Howdy. Crush, for love. Wonderful! Wonderful!"

Before leaving Monte Carlo we entered a café where a Gipsy orchestra was playing gay music. People who had won came in to refresh themselves and spend a half-hour gloating over what had hap-

pened. I saw a few women whose faces I had remarked at the gaming-table. How different they looked now! Some who had appeared terribly ugly actually were beautiful. Ibáñez continued to explain why writers were never lucky gamblers. He had a very complicated theory.

Boisterously, a man approached our table and tapping my host familiarly on the shoulder he said jovially: "Here is back your fifty francs, señor. What everybody has told me is true. I have won a hundred thousand francs to-night with your fifty!"

"What!" Ibáñez cried out. "You mean to tell me you came to beg money of me to gamble with?"

"Señor," the gentleman said after ordering a bottle of champagne from the waiter who had approached our table, "I must explain. I have been told by friends that one is very lucky when gambling with money gotten from you. When I said that my money was giving out, they said: 'Go to Ibáñez. If you get money from him, gamble with it. His money is lucky.' And they were right. One hundred thousand francs I have won with your fifty. Only it was so very difficult; because so many had done it."

"Dios!" Ibáñez called out. "So that is why I have never had any rest! Why I have been pestered every day since I have come to live in Mentone." And refusing to touch the wine offered, he motioned to me

to follow him out.

AMSTERDAM THE ODOR OF A CITY



AMSTERDAM-TULIPS AND DECAYED FISH

AMSTERDAM

THE ODOR OF A CITY

"Go To Amsterdam, young man. Go to Amsterdam!" was the frequent advice given to European young men during the last four centuries. The fisher village of the thirteenth century that boasted of the castle of the Lord of Amstel, who owned the dike and the river of the same name, a river now drained dry, rose high in commercial importance by the end of the sixteenth century; hoisting itself upon the back of Antwerp, the Belgian city partly destroyed by the siege of 1585. From then on, Amsterdam won ground in the commercial world with the certainty of a creeping sea.

Amsterdam, always alert to new discoveries and new opportunities, daring, adventuresome, liberty-loving, democratic, and yet in its quintessence the very opposite of all that; Amsterdam, whose very intensity of tolerance neutralized its effects, Amsterdam was and is the soul of the commercial world in Europe. Its seeming modernism and idealism were harnessed to commercial purposes. And if Spinoza found a harbor there, fleeing from the intolerance of

the Spaniards, he met an equal degree of intolerance, of a different kind, in the city in which he had sought refuge.

It was in Amsterdam that Peter the Great learned shipbuilding and the handling of men; and no one who has seen Petrograd and seen Amsterdam can be mistaken about Peter the Great's model while building the yellow-sky city on the marshes of the Muscovite empire.

Within a short distance of the North Sea, communicating with it by a canal that passes through the city. Amsterdam has been in communication with the rest of the world, the Orient, the Far Orient, the Americas, and rejected or accepted whatever it desired, whatever came from the far-off lands in the bottoms of her ships. A veneer of Orientalism and strangeness clings and cloys about its people and its buildings. There is a hint of the pagoda and a touch of the igloo in the architecture of most of its houses and monuments; something that smacks almost of the Venetian in its streets and in its industries; a cold artistic touch. The warmth of Amsterdam silk and velvet and the high color of its porcelain and print goods are tinged by a touch of coldness, of coldness and moistness. And people talk of art and literature in the same tone used for business and bookkeeping.

The three great *grachts*, the canals on the borders of which are the palaces of commercial princes, do remind one of the canals of Venice, and are in

spots even more beautiful than the waterways of the city of Doges. Yet, though the commercial history of both is so much alike, these two cities are so different. Venice breathes, occasionally even reeks, of romanticism, and Amsterdam continues to be a fisher village that has grown in commercial importance. In Venice, too, they have manufactured and dved silks and velvets and print goods and have painted porcelains; only how much warmer the colors! How much warmer and softer the tissues! Venice, too, has been a commercial city. Its opportunities had been even greater than those of Amsterdam, but Venetian merchant princes have been as romantic as they have been practical. Their sense of beauty frequently won over the strictly practical. In Venice people sing. The gondolas gliding through the Venetian canals are built with an eye to beauty, and are not the squat, square, slow-moving heavy barges that splash to and fro on the cold grachts.

Yet no one ever advised young men to go to Venice. It was: "Go to Amsterdam, young man. Go to Amsterdam!" To meet and match wits with the shrewdest and most calculating of all business men. Go to Amsterdam for nimbleness and perseverance. We speak of the sharpness in business of Connecticut Yankees, but do meet a dozen pairs of eyes on the Amsterdam Exchange and you will be convinced of the small chance any Connecticut Yankee would have when pitted against any Amsterdam business man. Eyes that pierce you through and through.

Eyes that weigh you. Eyes that possess a dactyl sense of finding out your weak spots. Eyes that toy with you. The luster and the power of penetration of these eyes give one the sensation of being approached by cold pointed steel. If you want to know more, look at the eyes in the paintings of Frans Hals, of Vermeer, of Jan Steen. Don't confuse them with the eyes in the paintings of Rembrandt. For he, the great one, if not the greatest of all painters, the Beethoven of painting, avoided the burghers and went down to the Jewish quarter to live near the old Weigh House, in the murky streets, to fix upon canvas the eyes of the Jews before they, too, had become hardened looking into the eyes of the Amsterdamers.

To-day the soft Dutch-Jewish eyes have become as cold as steel. All dreams and sentimentalisms have been drained out of them; drained as the Amstel River had been drained. There is hardly any resemblance between the Jews of Amsterdam and the Jews of the rest of the world. The old synagogues look like factories. The prayer-shawls, white bordered with black, which elsewhere make a congregation look like Arabs in a camp, the same prayer-shawls don't succeed in making the Jews of Amsterdam look like the Jews in other countries. There is something perfunctory about the cantor and the services. The *Predigher* has cut down the prayer services to the bone. The shawls have been shortened and narrowed until they are little more than

scarfs around the neck. The phylacteries have been made so small they look like sawed-off dominoes. Yet the percentage of Jews going to synagogue is greater in Amsterdam than in Jerusalem—though the faith be not as deep, as intense.

Go to Amsterdam if you want to see what four hundred years of intense commercialism can do to a city. Go to Amsterdam if you want to see what four hundred years of international banking can do to a people. Go to Amsterdam if you want to see what four hundred years of manufacturing for export can do to art. Go to Amsterdam if you want to see what the printing machine has done to culture. There is no need to travel all over the world to find out these things. Amsterdam is like an experimental station of history. Amsterdam is London, New York, Chicago, Paris, Berlin, and Alexandria in one; with all the haunting beauty and all the hideousness of the great cities of the world painted and echoed on its streets and monuments, its slums and palaces.

And there, too, I heard music of the same precise kind I had heard in Copenhagen. Music, the great Dutch writer, Multatuli, referred to as music with all the notes but with the soul taken out of them.

Multatuli! Sent by the Dutch Government to administer its possessions in the Indies, he came back with the tales of the horrors inflicted by Dutch commercialism upon the people. But his books were suppressed. Multatuli was starved; not because the Dutch were afraid that the cruelty of their admin-

istration was made public, but because they hadn't seen these cruelties. They were blind to them. Multatuli was a liar! Just as Erasmus was a liar. They were a cultural people, the Dutch. They had music schools, Royal Dutch institutions for literature and science, they had an Academy of Fine Arts, they had museums where the best art of the world was collected. Curious that the most inartistic countries should have the best collections of art! It has always been so. And always would be. Museums are tombstones under which lie buried great creations of immortal men.

Sit down in one of the coffee-houses near the Weigh House. Before long you will see two men crouched over the marble-top table pouring out glittering stones from little bags. Diamond dealers. "Antwerpers" as they call them; for Antwerp is the center of the diamond business in Europe. Yet the Amazon-looking ladies of Amsterdam wear fewer diamonds than the ladies of any other countries: though they do clothe their cold white, marble-white bodies in garish prints. An old man will offer you some old painting, genuine or counterfeit, and tell you its romantic history in the most matter-of-fact voice. You may be offered, along one of the grachts, a rare first edition of some book or another, a rare print, or an illuminated manuscript, the work of some monk of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Beware! The chances are ten to ten . . . But why should I talk about these things? Better watch the

colored sails of the little boats upon the greenish water of the North Sea ship canal. Better listen to the clatter of wooden shoes upon cobblestone pavements on the shore front. Better watch the deft movements with sail and rope of the clumsy, squat creatures whose voices ring as clear as bells; whose voices ring as clear as the bells of the churches of Amsterdam.

It is getting dark. A fluttering dark-brown sail catches the last sheen of the setting sun and throws the softened reflection on the water. It is getting dark and still, and the bridges over the canals on which people have hustled and bustled until a minute ago have quieted down, echoing only the rumble of broad-wheeled carts behind heavy clattering horses.

A man tapped me on the shoulder. I turned around. It was Kessler, the French short-story writer.

"What are you doing here?" he questioned with

a broad grin.

"Trying to find material for a 'Madonna of the Sleeping-Car,' I answered. "And what are you doing here?" I questioned in turn as we continued on our way arm in arm.

"I had originally come to look for material on Rembrandt," he confided, "but I have now found something better. I won't tell you, for you might steal the idea. A great idea."

A heavy odor, as of a mixture of narcissus and

onions, pinched my nostrils. I made a wry face, but Kessler threw his hands up in the air.

"Tulips! It is the tulip season. For a week we shall see nothing else but tulips in Amsterdam. People will talk of tulip flowers and tulip bulbs, and sing tulip songs, and dance tulip music. Tulips! I have been here before in tulip season. The Amsterdam ladies, too, shall be in tulip season. It does to women what the apple blossoms do in Normandy. If it were not for tulips, there would be fewer marriages. Tulip season is marriage season. Let me tell you a story. A thing I witnessed with my own eyes in one of the hotels a few years ago during the tulip season."

But I would have none of his story, for at that moment I saw a couple passing ahead of me and watched how their arms locked as another truck loaded with tulips rumbled by.

More tulips were passing by over the bridges. Barges and boats loaded and unloaded the precious bulbs from which emanated the heavy perfume; the perfume that dissipated the odors of the city and even the smells of the chemical factories, whose smoke-stacks belched the sickening stench of the ovens.

The dark-blue sky was now sprinkled heavily with a yellowish silver tinsel. I had been so indifferent to the other sex during the day I had hardly noticed their existence. It was only toward the evening that I had come to realize their lack of grace

and their heaviness. Why was it that I suddenly began to notice so many beautiful faces, so many graceful bodies? Where had they been until then? Had they hidden away? The step of women, which I had considered so heavy a while ago, now seemed graceful and light. The cold white faces were suffused with a velvety blush. Why were the girls turning around as they passed by us, laughing into our eyes, showing their milk-white teeth under their red lips? What had suddenly made them so coquettish—so coquettish and so desirable?

The tulip odor became heavier and heavier. My blood became warmer, as if I had drunk Tokay wine and listened to Gipsy music. I longed to shed my clothes and touch my own body.

Kessler, who had been walking silently beside me, said:

"There are many beautiful women in Amsterdam to-day. Their eyes are so blue, their complexions so warm and so white."

I looked into his eyes. They had become so languorous!

"What got you?" he asked.

"They are beautiful," I answered, pointing to

two girls sauntering past us.

Walking side by side while tulips began to cover the city, and crates of bulbs were being loaded and unloaded, we reached the Jewish quarter again. Have the murky streets been cleaned? The eyes of the Jews looked again like the eyes Rembrandt had painted. Anticipating the beginning of the tulip market, which was to start on the following day, deals were being closed. But the voices were not sharp; they had softened. The eyes were no longer cold. An Oriental drowsiness pervaded the whole quarter. The Sarahs and the Esthers walking out, in full Oriental regalia, looked like so many Queens of Sheba.

Who said that the Dutch played music as if the soul had been taken out of the notes? From an open window floated the music of a Bach fugue. It almost sounded like a sentimental ballad. There was the house Spinoza lived in. It was beautiful. Not far from there Rembrandt had housed himself to paint his memorable pictures. Had it been tulip time then, or did the echo of the tulip time extend itself in his memory? The little bags containing glittering diamonds had been replaced by large colored paper bags which contained samples of bulbs. The dealers handled the plants as carefully, as tenderly as if they were diamonds. For, indeed, many of the bulbs were worth the price of precious stones. Why? I don't know.

"And what happens to all these tulips and tulip bulbs?" I asked the man who offered some for sale. He looked at me open-mouthed. I had asked a foolish question.

"For export, of course! What happens to everything that is produced in Holland; men and things? Holland keeps nothing for herself. Amsterdam is a

passageway. Ten times as many things go out as come in," he explained with pride.

And yet a poetic element had stolen into his voice. Would he have spoken in the same tone if he had given me statistics of the quantity of soap, oil, canvas, cordage, and tobacco exported daily from Amsterdam?

Two young ladies passed us by, looking at us provokingly. Kessler looked at me and rose from his chair to follow them. They disappeared in one of the dark hallways. He returned soon.

"The earth has swallowed them!"

A few minutes later the same ladies passed in the opposite direction and again looked provokingly at us. Again Kessler rose from his chair when they had gone a little distance.

"Aren't they beautiful!" he said to me as he got up. He followed them again, but returned soon to tell me that he had lost trace of the girls.

When they appeared for the third time, I joined him, and we discovered the two brown-eyed daughters of Eve flat against the wall of a hallway. They came out laughingly.

"Why have you disappeared?" I asked after we had looked at one another for a few moments. They answered in a strongly scented French:

"Because, parce que, because you remained sitting."

"Let's go somewhere where we can sit down and talk," Kessler suggested to the ladies. And then,

with his French directness, he asked: "Do you like

champagne?"

We were soon seated at a table in a richly tapestried, elegantly decorated wine-house. A bottle of champagne stood between us. In a far-off corner an orchestra of ladies played languorous Vienna waltzes. The walls were hung with copies of pictures of the great masters. There were wine bottles and large steins of beer at almost every table. People laughed and sang and looked languorously at one another. The two ladies emptied their glasses of champagne, gulping down the brew like water. When their glasses had been refilled, they again swallowed the sparkling wine just as rapidly. They began to giggle and laugh.

Kessler looked at me. He had ordered the finest vintage. I drained my glass slowly and filled a second one. The effect of the wine soon superseded the effect of the odor of tulips. I looked at Kessler, he looked at me. We looked at the girls. How could we have been so blind? They were clumsy, commonplace-looking creatures. Their voices, which had seemed so lovely a while ago, were harsh and hoarse. Their clothes hung ungracefully about their bodies.

How many memories of Paris and of the South of France in that glass of champagne! Memories of graceful women sipping slowly with the tip of the lips the honey of wine crowded before my eyes.

I wondered what the wine meant to these women. I wondered whether they would have known the

difference between that rare vintage and apple cider.

How heavy the odor of tulips! How heavy and objectionable!

"Another glass of champagne, Kessler?"

Forgetting our manners, we left the two women sitting at the table before another bottle of wine. We did not even trouble to shake hands with them.

At the door of the hotel Kessler said:

"I don't know whether I should be grateful to the champagne or resent it. That bottle has dissipated a mirage."

On the canal, clumsy creatures, shod in cumbersome wooden shoes, were unloading boxes of illsmelling bulbs, the odor of which was a mixture of narcissus and onions.

Near the old Weigh House, sharp-eyed people, their hands full of dirt, were bargaining in raucous voices about the price of a vegetable. Unlovely women were walking up and down, beckoning and laughing into unlovely faces of grinning, unwashed creatures. And over the whole town, between the pavement and the yellow sky, floated the odor of decayed fish and stale marsh water, while music, with the soul taken out of the notes, was being pounded out on mechanical pianos.



LONDON WHO SAYS SHE'S FLAT ON HER BACK?



ST. PAUL'S-ILLUSION OF ROME IN LONDON

LONDON

WHO SAYS SHE'S FLAT ON HER BACK?

To LEAVE Paris for London is like leaving the company of a beautiful woman for a man's club. Cities belong to distinct sexes. London is preëminently the city of men. Streets, people, voices, gaits, dress, size of spoons and forks at restaurants as well as the massiveness of the plates on the table, herald the city of men, where women are relegated to the background, to homes and duties. And the women one meets in London are unobtrusive, retiring, apologetic for their existence.

I arrived in London shortly before noon on a day of the year when midnight is only a little darker than mid-day; and my night practically began at luncheon at the Savoy. Jonathan Cape was desperately trying to duplicate the luncheon of a few weeks before in one of the famous Paris restaurants. After the hors-d'œuvres, Jonathan said:

"Not bad . . . not bad!"

Only after I had approved, he talked about books and authors; but when the roast was brought on silver trays, he waxed enthusiastic about the quality of meat in England. We washed the meat down with good French wine while John was pointing out celebrities to me at this, that, or the other table. Then we slowly sipped our port after a very delectable coffee.

It was half-past three in the afternoon when we left the Savoy. The streets were dark, and the fog was so thick I held on to John's elbow after I had bumped into a taxi which had mounted the sidewalk and had come to a stop in front of a lamppost.

When we arrived at Cape's offices I was told that it was tea-time. Even drinking tea was better than being on the street again. Even listening to John's clipped French was better than risking the clammy humidity outdoors. It was warm and pleasant in the office. Cape told many good stories.

Back at the Savage Club, "Spike" Hunt introduced me to luminaries of English literature who had accepted this tall, boyish American representative of letters "because he was so un-American" (whatever that means). Spike asked me whether I was anxious to meet Shaw, who lives only two houses away from the club, on the Adelphi Terrace. I declined the invitation. I was to meet another celebrity that night. One celebrity a day was as good as an apple a day. Spike's friends grew warmer toward me after this remark. And one of them said: "Most Americans think Shaw is another monument

that has to be visited in London, a monument like St. Paul's Cathedral or the National Galleries at Trafalgar Square or the British Museum."

We drew up a dozen strong in front of the narrow bar at the club. Standing three deep, we waited for our glasses to be filled by the cheerful, whiteaproned rubicund waiter, who knew every one by name, and had had mine spelled out for him so he could address me properly.

Up in my room the valet had already prepared my evening clothes. He had taken for granted that I would be wanting to dress for dinner, and was waiting to assist me.

From my window I could see the thick shadows of boats floating down the Thames River and the outlines of chimneys across the bridge. The tooting of boats and the piercing sound of shrill whistles rose above all the other noises of the city.

When I went down the street, the fog had cleared considerably, though dark vapors still traveled a few feet from the ground, rising like a filmy curtain of rags drawn by an unseen hand. I inquired of a policeman, a polite "bobby" standing in a hallway, the way to Kensington Gardens. He pointed to a bus just going in that direction, but I jumped into a taxi. The uniformed man looked at me angrily; I had asked for information and then didn't use it.

By the time I reached Rebecca West's home, the

night promised to be clear; stars were timidly appearing on the horizon.

I knew Wells was to be one of the dinner guests, but to my surprise I found still another celebrity—Carl Capek, author of "R. U. R." There were two more men, and one other woman besides Rebecca.

We fenced for supremacy in the discussion at table. I liked Capek, only he was so impressed by the great author, his opinions were molded to suit the ones expressed in Wells's nimble way, in that high-pitched feminine voice of his. Wells rebels against opinions that are not his own. He was annoyed with some of the statements made by Rebecca West in her articles on America.

"Why," he said, "you should have read my book on America before you wrote your pieces."

"How long have you been in America?" Rebecca fired at him, in that passionate alto voice of hers.

"Something like two weeks," was the answer.

"The cheek!" Rebecca rejoined. "I have been there for months, and he asks me to read his book written after a two weeks' visit."

Wells smiled condescendingly, as if to say: "I can see in two weeks what it would take you two years to see."

How well I was to remember that smile of his when he wrote a book on Russia after a three days' visit to Muscovite land.

Thereafter the dinner dragged. Even when Wells launched on his favorite topic of crystals and stones,

the audience was listless. Somehow, we were smarting because of Wells's condescending smile. Only Capek seemed not to have noticed what had happened. He was bubbling over with the pleasure of talking English. He had learned the language from books. This was his first visit to England, and he was speaking its tongue.

One never sees a city as well in the daytime as in the night. A city in the daytime is only hodgepodge, but at night it takes on mysterious airs. The ghosts of the ones that once thronged the place live with a far greater intensity in all their ugliness and beauty, and speak louder and truer of all that agitated them, than the living ever did.

A young lady in spangled dress stole out carefully from one of the fashionable West End houses and ran at top speed in her slippered feet to the corner. Evidently, she expected some one to wait for her, and as nobody was in sight, she ran just as fast back to her door. Hesitating, latchkey in hand, she ran to the opposite corner. Some one was coming. When she had made sure it wasn't the one she expected, she ran in the opposite direction. In the quiet of the night I could hear her slippered feet running all around the block. On the opposite side of the street a carriage stopped. A young man stepped out, black coat, silk hat, and white tie. The two met. She reproached him for his tardiness. He pointed to his watch. She made a move as if to return to her home.

He picked her up bodily and put her into the carriage, which immediately rolled away.

I had watched the scene from the hallway of a house. Suddenly I heard a woman's voice near me.

"Young ladies have got hall the luck. And it's she whom I believe didn't want to go. And I'm waitin' and waitin'. Saiy, are you a strainger?"

I turned round. Still young, under twenty-five, unkempt hair sticking out from under her red hat—no, she was not drunk, but she looked so tired and so hungry. Truly, she had been "waitin' and waitin'," and on the spur of the moment I asked her whether she knew London well. Would she be my guide?

"Just to show you around?" she asked several times.

"Just to show me around," I answered, hoping she would be grateful nothing else was demanded of her. But when we had gone a block, she told me it would be silly, very silly, to just walk around. She proposed a "bite to eat" and took me to a place she knew.

There were other women there, in red hats, and they looked so much alike they seemed like sisters. All of them had been "waitin' and waitin' "... Yet, like good sports, they looked aside, paying no attention to me; to me, the find of another woman. "Findings is keepings."

My guide became a little more loquacious after she had eaten and "warmed her insides" with a cup of coffee, repeated twice. She talked to me loudly enough to be overheard by the others.

"Silly notion that I should show him the city. Silly . . . silly!" Finally, she broke out, "If it is a guide you want, you could have hired one; there are such."

Had I insulted her? Or was it because she would not infringe on another one's profession?

I trusted to luck and a sense of direction to get me through the town. London is not one big city but a conglomeration of small villages and towns, spreading, sprawling capriciously in all directions. Close to one another these villages superficially represent a unit, but at night even more than in the daytime the differences between them are easily discernible. Architecture and material are as unlike as if there were no national trait or taste to hold them together. Each street is of a different social level from the other, with misery or wealth blatantly exposed to those who care to see. Perhaps there is no more misery in London than anywhere else in a great city, but the misery of London is historical, and those who suffer give all the evidences of having long been accustomed to it. Neither homes nor people show any desire to shake it off-to wrest themselves out of it. It seems quite natural that countless homeless men should be seated around the curbs, on the doorsteps, on the benches in parks. It is part of the picture to see women of all ages in so many bedraggled red hats, the badge for certain women, stray hair hanging over their ears and eyes, reclining in all postures, leaning against one another like tottering poles . . . along the Thames, against lamp-posts and the stone wall along the shore. At every corner one is accosted by a man or a woman with the words:

"I saiy . . . I saiy . . ."

A moment later I was at London Tower, the English bastile that stands watch over the many centuries and traditions of the people. Whether Julius Cæsar constructed it, as Shakespeare claims, or it is the work of William the Conqueror, its military architecture bespeaks foresight and fear. Its dark gray stones, the jutting out of its buttresses, make for little living space within. For every square foot of breathing space, there are ten times as many feet of wall thickness—as impenetrable as English custom and English tradition. But I was staying there too long to admire it. One of the gorgeously clad guards, one of the "beef-eaters," walking his eight paces back and forth in front of the gate, stepped up to look at me. I remembered the impartiality of Queen Elizabeth, who, to maintain a balance among her enemies, the Jesuits and the Puritans, locked them up together in this very tower; and though I was not an enemy, I beat a hasty retreat.

I don't know how long I walked, but suddenly, coming out of a narrow little street, I found myself in front of St. Peter's of Rome. The resemblance was so strong, I rubbed my eyes several times be-

fore I realized I was only in front of St. Paul's Cathedral. More than a direct imitation of architectural line, the very soul of the outside architecture had been transposed to London; as if some other great master were composing music in the spirit of Bach, not because of imitation, but because of soul kinship.

I thought I had escaped the "I saiy" people. But presently, from behind the pillars, there emerged one after another, in the shape of a wedge, as birds fly in the air, one . . . four . . . five . . . ten. . . . I began to run at top speed, all of them after me. Refusing to give them anything made me feel I was taking something from them. I was running away from those I had robbed! But I had had food that evening and they had probably had none, and so I outstripped them.

London misery . . . There are misery and prostitution in Paris also, but at their worst they have a certain air of elegance. I wondered what kind of man could be tempted by this kind of woman. I wondered whether prostitution was not a justification for their existence, a profession which they never exerted; the kind of excuse a much better situated class of women give themselves when they pretend they are actresses to excuse their idle existences.

I sat down on one of the white stone steps of the Temple Church in the Temple Quarter, that twelfthcentury franchised city with its own laws and its own ancient privileges. Why couldn't all the wise men dreaming here have done something for the people outside, so willing to work for them and die for them? I amused myself reading the signs on the doors. There was one that fascinated me. Zangwill lived there!

Was it coincidence or had I willed it so strongly? Presently Zangwill appeared on the door-steps. We had met in New York. After he had recovered from his astonishment, he told me:

"It's curious . . . very curious, but I have just been thinking about America . . . about New York. And you were in a throng of people who appeared before me. I saw you as distinctly as I see you now. Indeed, it seems like a continuation of my wool-gathering." He tapped my shoulders in friendliness, but I couldn't help thinking that he was assuring himself of my existence in the flesh.

What a different Zangwill from the one I knew walked out of the Temple Quarter! In New York the unusual strangeness of his face made me think of an arrogant Quasimodo, rasping and impatient. As he walked beside me now, his voice sounded so mellow, so warm. He told me he had been working that evening late into the night. He wanted to know what had brought me to London, what had made me roam the streets; but he waited for no answer, as if he knew.

"We should both have a bite to eat."

How unnecessary words were! When we walked

out of the restaurant we shook hands. No, I couldn't come . . . I was leaving the following day. . . . He wanted to take me to Soho . . . "as good as the Latin Quarter; the Latin quarter of London. And have you seen the two totems: Gog and Magog, the mascots of London?"

Suddenly it began to rain, a fine, piercing, cold, needle drizzle that penetrated my coat, wetting me to the skin. I ran for cover to Haymarket. Men and women were impassively unloading the trucks of vegetables and fruits, without caring, without paying any attention to the rain, inured and accustomed to it. The "cat place" was full. The seats and wall-benches around the tables were occupied. The thick smoke from pipes floated above my head. A hundred undefinable odors mixed together with the stale boiling oil in which fish were fried. I edged in beside a huge bearded man in oilskins who was talking to another one about London pool, bounded on the west by London Bridge, and how it was once teeming with ships coming from many lands and was now but a deserted water lane.

"Them was other times, friend . . . them was other times."

My appearance—I was in full dress—had caused the voices to become subdued. Drowsiness overtook me. I leaned against the wall, closing my eyes.

When I awoke, an hour later, I was leaning against a broad-shouldered man in oilskins, who had not moved all that time lest he disturb me. We

smiled at one another, I apologetically and he indulgently. The untouched cup of coffee in front of me was cold, and so, without waiting, my neighbor called to the waiter:

"Bye, chainge it, and make it 'ot!"

I had his cup filled also, in spite of his repeated protestations. And then he questioned:

"Strainger?"

I nodded, my mouth full of coffee.

"This is a 'ard town," he said, pityingly. "Whatever your calling, this is a 'ard town."

I agreed with him. It confirmed my impressions thoroughly.

As I again walked by the house in the West End district from which the young lady had stolen out on her toes, I saw a worried woman, wrapped in a long coat, standing outside on the top step, looking anxiously in all directions. So she had not come back in time. Her absence had been noticed. A scandal. A romance. A mystery.

In the bar-room at the Savage Club, a few resident members, just back from an all-night gay party, too tired to start on the day's work and too stimulated to go to sleep, were discussing the comparative futures of England and France. A big, tall fellow, with huge fists sticking out of immaculately white cuffs, was saying, through clenched teeth:

"And if anybody says England is flat on her back,

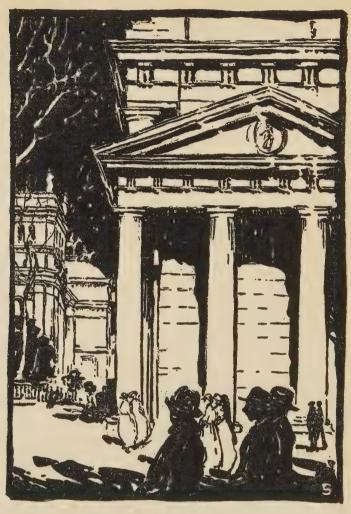
LONDON

if anybody only says England is flat on her back . . . Why, our pound sterling is the only money at par in Europe!"

I hurried up the stairs to my room, thinking how far from "par" were the people I had seen.



BERLIN WE LOVE PARIS



BERLIN DEFEATED WAS STILL THE STRONGER

BERLIN

WE LOVE PARIS

There were two kinds of strangers in Berlin. Those who lived at the Hotel Adlon, hated and feared, and those who lived elsewhere at a dozen other hotels and *pensions*, and who were only hated. At the Adlon lived the officials of the Allies' commissions and journalists representing the newspapers of the countries which had once warred against Germany. While in the other hotels . . . Well, in the other hotels lived who could and who had to.

The mark was tumbling. In the morning a cigarette was worth fifty thousand marks, in the evening a hundred thousand. A half-decent meal cost a million. In the middle of the dinner the head waiter would stand up on a chair to announce that the prices on the bill of fare had changed while we were eating. Coffee was no longer ninety thousand marks; it had risen to one hundred and ten. Before the dinner was over, another rise of prices was announced.

Germany was tumbling fast. The people were eager to exchange worthless paper for something

that had value. They walked around with pockets stuffed with the one hundred perfectly unnecessary things they had acquired; pen-knives, fountain-pens, handkerchiefs, Gillette razors, combs, neckties, watches, knick-knacks; considering themselves the winners when the mark had taken another tumble an hour after they had acquired these things.

Peaceful, indolent, stolid Berlin had become a madhouse! People looked around, right and left, to find something upon which they could spend their money; really happy only when they could lay their hands on an American dollar bill, no matter what price, no matter what the exchange was. Professors, former generals, members of the Reichstag, musicians, students, and the street-cleaners were at one in that. The cafés were full of Russians; Russians who had come for recreation from the Soviet régime, preferring the fire to the frying-pan. And these Russians had money, gold dollars, and didn't look at prices. They paid generously for everything. Money, gold, was as worthless to them as the paper marks.

At the "Pariser Cabaret" they danced the latest American jazz and drank beer and champagne, while two lanky, bony, ashen-haired, homely women sang a naughty song full of French words and French allusions as they moved their bodies in a manner uglier than obscene.

I am yet to hear so much English spoken in one place in any foreign city as I heard in Berlin. But the words were butchered and stabbed until they

were left unrecognizable corpses. Nothing is so sad as the corpse of a word. Yet they insisted on talking English, and avenged themselves cruelly for the injustice done by the Russians to the German language. If there be no other bond between these two peoples, this butchery of languages is enough; one strong bond. Military nations invariably have been butchers of languages, always insisting on retaining the flections of their own languages while speaking another one. Militaristic tendencies stiffen the throats and stuff the ears.

They drank beer and guzzled champagne and ate fat goose-flesh, anxious to stow away in their stomachs what they possibly could in exchange for their falling mark.

When the manager of the cabaret announced that the price of everything had risen again, the musicians stopped playing and would not begin to thump the piano and scrape the violins until new salary adjustment had been made with them. They stopped playing again three quarters of an hour later; they had been talking among themselves while they had been playing, and had come to the conclusion that the adjustment had not been a fair one. And people ate and ate and drank and drank.

What would you do if you had only two hours to live? Put that question to a Berliner. I know the answer. Gänsefleisch.

Having paid with a dollar bill, I aroused the attention of the head waiter and manager. The cash-

ier came to take the money and place it safely in his desk.

At the *Bierhalle* near the Oranienbürgerstrasse, within sight of the Jewish synagogue built in the Moorish style, hundreds of people were seated around sprawling tables, dressed in *Ersatz* clothes of paper, drinking cheap *Ersatz* beer, and talking a substitute language among themselves and to the waiter. What a mad dream! Germany defeated was stronger than the victors but did not know what to do with its strength; and the victors were exhausted. Germany was like a healthy man put into a sick bed; the worst possible patient.

Whatever fault one once found with the Germans, one always felt a strong reality about them. If they were coarse and unrefined, they were real, they were reliable, they were trustworthy, and their work was uncommonly honest. They had no imagination—true; but they knew how to perfect what others had imagined or created. This very thumbnail reality and unimaginative planning and figuring led them to war, to great victories, and to the ultimate cataclysm. Logic lost. They failed. They will never admit they have failed. They have only lost. These people will never realize their mistaken premises.

Now that they had lost their qualities, they were flounderingly searching to imitate the actions of people with more imaginative minds. How ridiculous their dancing, how ridiculous their gaiety, their imitation French gaiety. They have fought France because they wanted to go to Paris . . . en masse. The newly found ambition seemed to be to make a Paris out of Berlin. Like Mahomet, Berlin went to the mountain when the mountain refused to come to it. The Russians alone seemed to accept the substitute for the true thing. The new cry was: Make Berlin gayer than Paris. If Paris and the world should help the Germans to realize that, we should be spared another war.

How much I had preferred the Unter den Linden of the time of imperial Germany to the Unter den Linden of the democratic one. Even the whitewashed, scrubbed statues of the *Sieges Allee* was much more real then than it seemed now.

Under the democratic cap and democratic cloth Berlin was still what it had been, what it always will be—the suburb and amusement place of Potsdam, the real capital of Germany.

dam, the real capital of Germany.

Opposite the old imperial palace, in front of the old university building, within sight of the imposing statues of the Humboldt brothers, groups of people were talking excitedly, still discussing the different moves of the generals a year after peace had been concluded. I listened in. If Hindenburg had had the right kind of assistance, such things would not have happened. Never. Never.

Of course, these people had not been in the war;

but the actual battles had been merely the execution of plans made behind the lines by a militaristic bureaucracy. War was a game of chess. They had made false moves. The Allies had not won, Germany had lost. A young student explained that the Allies had lost the war a dozen times according to the rules of the game. But they would not give up. He shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly.

"Ah, these Frenchmen. They were unwissenschaftlich, unscientific. They hadn't played the game well. Germany knew when she lost."

Why, at Verdun—his father had been at Verdun—it had all been calculated. . . . They had won the battle; why had the French not given up? The Frenchmen were *leichtsinnige Kerle*, superficial individuals.

How these Germans love to talk! Gossip is not only a habit with them, it is a necessity. Three of us went down to the Dorotheenstrasse. It used to be such a lively street. Students used to parade up and down and discuss the day's duels and their favorite actresses. Nothing had happened to the street itself. It had not been torn by shells and aëroplane bombs, as many of the streets of Paris had been, and yet Dorotheenstrasse seemed more desolate, more disrupted, and as silent as if completely uninhabited.

They took me to a quiet little restaurant near the Nicolai Kirche; because it was the only place where one could still get real beer. When the students' spirits had risen, after the third glass, I asked:

"But what did your father say had happened in Verdun? Why hadn't they taken it?"

"Mein lieber Herr. We were at fifteen kilometers from the fortress. The general staff had calculated how many people all the French guns let loose at once could kill within a given time. Then we doubled the number of men and sent them against the fortress. Half of them were to be killed and half of them were to reach and storm the stronghold. But when we had gone three kilometers, the first time, it was found out that the general staff must have made a mistake. At the rate the soldiers were falling, all of them would have been killed three kilometers before they would have reached the walls. So we withdrew. The general staff sat down to make other calculations. Yes, they had made a mistake. After the regiments were reorganized, we were again sent against the fortress and again it was found out that the general staff had made a mistake. But had the Frenchmen been scientific, they would have given up. But they were not. You see what happened?" he explained further. "It is perfectly plain. We simply didn't have good enough mathematicians. We had great generals. Only our mathematicians were a deplorable lot. The French had good mathematicians but bad generals. Mathematics will win the next war. I am telling now to the friends of my group. Mathematics should be the science upon which all intellectual Germany should concentrate!"

Prussia is thinking hard! The tumbling mark wipes out the internal debt and makes Germany solvent in the eyes of international bankers. They expect a shower of dollars. America is really their friend. When they shall owe billions to America, the United States shall be on their side in the next war. The U. S. shall always be on the side of the country that owes her money. Thus reasons Prussia.

I looked into the faces of my two beer companions. Perfectly quiet, normal faces, with nothing of the savage in them. I shuddered at the vision that some day my own sons will be grappling with them on a blood-soaked battle-field. These young Germans would fight and die impersonally in the name of Mathematics and Logic.

Having paid another few million marks, I separated myself to wander alone.

You can see all the churches of Berlin by taking a tram at the fish-market. The cathedral built by Frederick the Great, the Heiliggeist Kirche, the Franciscan monks' church, Jerusalem Kirche which had been founded by a returned Crusader, Trinity Church basking in the shadow of the Kaiserhof Hotel, and the French church, where I stopped to have a look again at the Schauspielhaus, Berlin's celebrated theater; where most of the experimenters in stagecraft had operated.

It was midnight. Groups of people were on their way home discussing loudly the mark and trying to find a goat; to explain the perplexity over the financial machinations which were ruining them. Holland was ruining Germany. No, the bankers of Austria were doing it. That was all untrue. America was doing it. Americans had descended upon Berlin and were buying off property and paying for it in depreciated German currency. The Jews, yes, the Jews were responsible. They agreed on that. They had found the expiatory buck.

I thought of how this discussion of the fall of the mark kept their minds away from the realities of life.

A man who had been sitting in the dark on one of the steps of the Schauspielhaus approached me politely, talking first in French and then in English. He could show me Berlin: the Berlin only few people see.

Our bargain was quickly made; an American dollar for the night, and I was to pay him something to eat later on. He had been in the war. He had lost an arm there. He still wore a long gray coat and pinned underneath was the Iron Cross. His face was pale and calm, and his blue eyes were like those of an innocent child. The horrors of the war had made no imprint on him. I remembered the faces and the eyes of Frenchmen who had been in the war, and the faces and the eyes of Englishmen, of the cripples I had seen in Paris and in London. The look in their eyes was like that of men who had come out of the depths of Hell. But this man's eyes were quiet and blue.

There was no bitterness in him.

"We," he explained, "had won the war. We, the soldiers. But there has been a mistake somewhere. Ein kleiner Fehler."

We entered a dancing-hall on the upper floor of a house not far from the old museum. The place was full. Two negroes—one at the piano and one twirling sticks about a drum—were busy beating out jazz rhythms, and the permeating odor of stale beer, which makes one believe himself to be in a brewery, and which permeates the whole of Germany, greeted my nostrils. The usual unpleasant mixture of this odor with that of strong tobacco and sweat was made still more unbearable by the odor of cheap perfumes and cosmetics.

And there wasn't a woman in the place! Men danced with men. Men sat with arms wound around the necks of younger men, whose lips were painted, whose eyes were stained, and whose eyebrows were shaved. There were lovers' quarrels, jealousies, and flirtations. Still there was no atmosphere of viciousness. It was as it should be. A little later my guide led me to another place, where the same thing was repeated. Only this time we two and an American painter were the only males. No one paid any attention to us.

In front of the arsenal, the old arsenal, opposite the crown prince's palace, a woman stepped out and, speaking to the guide while looking at me, inquired whether I was ready to go in and witness a Black Mass. When I refused, she began to give the most minute details of what was going to happen, in the calmest voice. A very distinguished affair. A very high-class affair. Only the élite will be there. The price was only three dollars; three dollars in American money. No other money was accepted. It was very exclusive. No Germans. Only strangers, guests of the city. It was a Black Mass imported from Paris.

While I was debating with myself whether I should follow the invitation or not, some one tapped me on the shoulder and addressed me by name. It was an old friend, a young Russian I had known in New York before the war. I had heard he had been killed in an anti-Bolshevist uprising. Then again that under a different name he had helped Trotsky organize the Red armies. His name had become one of the most important ones in Soviet circles.

"What are you doing here?" I asked him.

"I have come for a little rest. A little distraction." And he smiled.

He looked inches taller than when I had last seen him—taller, wider, broader. I remembered how he was in the days when we sat together at a table, in a café on the east side, discussing the future of the world and art and philosophy. There was nothing of the military man in him then.

Yes, he was staying at the Adlon. His room adjoined mine. I paid off my guide. The two of us returned to the hotel.

Why had he spoken of a room when he occupied four, he and his secretaries? Dawn was breaking, but the two young men, the secretaries, were playing cards, a bottle of brandy before them. They stood up, and though they addressed him with the democratic title of "Tavarish," it was not difficult to see that military discipline had taught them his superior rank. They sat back on their chairs only when he had permitted them by a nod of his head.

"Now tell me, Max," I asked, "how did you come to be what you are? What military training had you had before?"

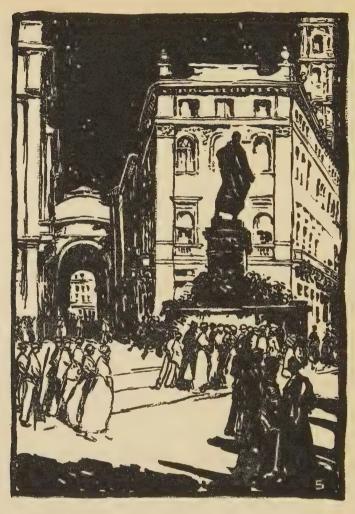
"Better not ask."

"And why that tremendous army?" I questioned. And again I saw the light of the fanatic in his eyes as he began to expound the theory and the reasons. It all sounded so familiar to me. Twenty years before I had heard the theory expounded almost word for word in Germany. In twenty years from now will some Russian student give me the same explanation about a Verdun as the young Berlin student had given me? I wondered whether I should not be again treated to the same sights of men with painted lips and women boxing, to *Ersatz* clothes and Black Masses; Black Masses for distinguished foreigners who had dollars to pay.

And the mark was tumbling.

Shall Moscow soon be the capital of Germany? Shall Berlin soon become the capital of Russia? And the mark was falling!

MILAN THUS SPAKE MUSSOLINI



MILAN-GENESIS OF THE MARCH ON ROME

MILAN

THUS SPAKE MUSSOLINI

AFTER short sojourns in Brescia, Vicenza, and Verona, the three medieval Italian cities which even Mussolini has not succeeded in modernizing, though his Napoleonic face painted in black is stamped all over the walls of the cities, the green fields of the hills on both sides on the road to Milan were very refreshing. We journeyed by car. I had to stop several times to inquire the way and everywhere I was met with the Fascist salute. Not answering it cost me many a mile, for I was either refused information or deliberately misdirected. Gone the day of the overpolite Italian. You could obtain information at the cost of your conscience only.

At the hotel in Milan, across the Duomo, the cathedral, the German proprietor complained he was losing trade because the lira was much higher than the franc. The French, he claimed, were getting all the tourist trade because of the low value of the franc. Speaking confidentially in half-tones, he whispered:

"Mussolini is ruining Italy. What we need is a low lira and not a high one. I shall soon have to close the hotel, signor. What we need are American loans and a low lira. But Mussolini uses the dollars to peg the lira."

A journalist friend of mine who had once been an intimate of Mussolini, and was still on friendly terms with him, came to tell me he had made arrangements that I should meet the great man. Having already seen him, years ago, at a socialistic convention, I declined the invitation. I could see no greatness in the man who had replaced an economic philosophy with a black shirt, and international politics with a gesture of the hand. As a theatrical régisseur he may outdo Reinhardt; as the head of a government he was acting an apoplectic Napoleon.

The hotel-keeper being present at my refusal and also witness to what I said, stuffed his ears; not because he didn't want to hear such heresy uttered, but because he was afraid he committed a crime unless he showed his unwillingness to listen to such words.

Heresy. Dio mio! Dio mio!

That the world should be willing to take such nonsense seriously. However, it worked and still works; which is the crux of all things.

Alone again in the room, I opened the windows to listen to the sounds of the streets which I knew so well and had once loved. I had always been able to hear a vocal concert at will, whenever I was in Milan, by opening the windows and listening to the voices of the people below. Their voices had always pleased me. Milanese voices of men and women, whether calling out the price of fish or hawking fruit, conversation between men and women on the street corners, and even the cry of children, had always had a peculiar quality which charmed my ears.

There never had been a time when I could not hear a half-dozen songs at the same time. Milan was a singing city. The song of the baker-woman, tossing her golden-haired head back as she kneaded the dough, white sleeves of her shirt rolled up to dimpled elbows; the song of the cobbler working outside on the street, his back against the wall, and punctuating his rhythms with hammer upon the sole of an old pair of shoes; the song of the black-smith, the anvil song which Verdi had so successfully made use of in one of his sugary operas, and the songs of lovers and husbands and wives and children all over the city; all these songs had been pleasant to the ear.

The whole of Milan had been singing. But not that night; not that night, not in many nights before, and in many nights since. Mussolini had smothered the voices of the Milanese, the song-birds of Italy.

Looking out of my window, in spite of the spires of cathedrals and churches the city looked like Pittsfield and Pittsburgh, like Lyons or Maubeuge, or other industrial cities in the North of France.

I called one of the bell-boys and putting a fivelira piece in his hand, I said:

"Now sing to me the latest song."

The boy looked at the money and looked at me and raised his shoulders eloquently. Had I asked him to talk Chinese he could not have been more perplexed.

"But, signor," he said, repeating the Fascist

phrase, "Italy must work now and not sing."

"But can't you work when you sing or can't you sing when you work? Come, I have been in Milano before and I know!"

I had evidently tackled the wrong boy, for he raised his right hand in the Fascist salute and marched haughtily out of the room without taking the money.

"You will be denounced yet," my journalistic friend told me, when I later related what had happened. "Before the evening is over the little bell-boy will have reported you to his *capitano*, and there might be trouble."

I stood in front of the cathedral begun by Gian Galeazzo Visconti and finished by Napoleon. The great French conqueror hated unfinished things, and Gian Galeazzo had started building the cathedral on too gigantic a scale. How evident the line where the degenerate artist-ruler had left off and where the rude rotarian emperor had begun! The childish Gothic architecture is unable to save the cathedral

from the commonplace. The statues and crypts and walls and spires look like afterthoughts in a construction built for other purposes. It might serve as a model for one of our moving-picture cathedrals.

How different the Sant' Ambrogio, not far from the cathedral! It is beautiful, simple, the Lombardian architecture still predominating as a unit in

spite of the numerous rebuildings.

What a jumble Milan is architecturally, anyhow! The Via Ticinese looks Greek because of the Corinthian columns. The church of Sant' Eustorgio is Romanesque. The Portinari Chapel of the same church is in the style of the Renaissance, and is made of brick. The St. Nazare, with its glass-stained windows of German workmanship, makes one think of some little church in Nuremberg. Greek, French, German, Renaissance, and rococo style overlap one another and make of Milan not a city but an experimental architectural station. The fifty-seven varieties of "dull pickles" are all there.

Not only the churches and the houses, the people also are a jumble of many nations and many races. Any careful breeder would have avoided such mixtures in his barn-yard. The result? Blue-eyed women with curly black African hair. Red-haired men with steel-gray Nordic eyes. Shoulders of giants upon legs of dwarfs. High-pitched voices in giant bodies. Deep bass voices in the throats of rollicking little rotund children playing in the gutters of the streets. The bloods of all the conquering armies of Europe

flow in the veins of the Milanese. Gauls, Franks, Spaniards, Arabs, Africans, Germans.

And I had loved them once. I had loved Milan, the city at the foot of the Alps. I had cherished every hour I had lived in it, and every brick and stone of its buildings.

That songless, depressing evening I went to visit the *pension* of Signora Gloria on the Naviglio Canal, whose dry bed cuts through streets of the city outside the Porta Ticinese.

I had not seen the old lady in twenty years. I had lived in her house in my young days, together with twenty other young men and women, students, singers, sculptors. I wondered how she would receive me. My last exploit there had been the stealing of a ham from the kitchen; to slice it up and feast upon it in company of the other students. Whether the food hadn't been sufficient or because we were all young, we were always as hungry an hour after dinner as we had been an hour before it. We got little food for little money; sixty lire a month.

I found Signora Gloria only little older in appearance than I had left her. Twenty pensionaires were sitting around the same old narrow long table over which she presided. The seat I had once occupied was now filled by a young American girl studying singing under Signor Fellipe, the same deaf teacher I had spent many months with. Signora Gloria recognized me after a few desultory questions, and, pressing me to her ample bosom expansively, she

clapped her hands and regaled her *pensionaires* by reciting laughingly and volubly the stealing of the ham.

"And, signores and signorinas, look at him. You wouldn't think that he once stole a ham!"

She did not tell the whole story. She had put my luggage out and driven me from the *pension* ingloriously. But distance and time lend charm even to thievery. Don't we romance about our Jesse Jameses?

They all laughed. We shook hands. A chair was added at the table. We talked of this and that and I inquired for many of my friends of the student days. Two or three had visited the place again in the twenty years that had elapsed.

When the dinner was over, I was quite certain I should steal a ham again if I were to attempt to live at the *pension*. When an extra bottle of wine had been put on the table for all of us, I noticed that one chair had remained unoccupied during the dinner and that the service was laid out before it on the white napkin on the table. And because the other youngsters were not very interesting, I thought that the most interesting individual, male or female, just happened not to come for dinner.

Talking and listening to Signora Gloria, who had never been more voluble and reminiscent, I could not keep that empty chair and dinner service from my eyes or mind. Unable to repress the question any

longer, I asked:

"But who is the *pensionaire* that has deserted us to-night?"

They grew silent. Signora Gloria's eyes filled with

tears.

"It is Enrico's place. Enrico Caruso's. It was his chair when he lived here. And so it remains empty; empty only in appearance, signore, for I am sure Enrico's spirit occupies it."

I had never known Caruso had lived in that pension. I inquired for the good-for-nothing, lazy husband of Signora Gloria; a golden-voiced, lazy, mustachioed Neapolitan.

"He died ten years ago."

What a vain evening. How vain the efforts to wipe out twenty years and make believe that it was yesterday; that nothing had happened in between; that the echo of the old laughter still hovered about. How tiresome and exhausting the effort to concretize memories! Where were Luigi and Armand, Antonio and Josephine, Nego and Maria, and all the other boon companions of my youth? They all were twenty years older, mothers, fathers, spread over the continents and only rarely remembering the days we had spent together. The pranks we had played on one another! The semi-starvation at the pension which could not dim our enthusiasms and our hopes for the future.

The young people now there were as gay as we had once been. The young American, a Californian, had the very devil in her when she danced or sang.

But I was out of it. Try as hard as I would, I was out of it. And no make-believe abandonment could remedy that. The acid of time had bitten into me. The face and the body may remain young, but the quality of laughter betrays one's age to one's self better than a mirror does.

I inquired of the students to know their ambitions and the arts they were devoting themselves to. Four studied electrical engineering. A half-dozen studied medicine. Two were theological students. Only one studied sculpture. The young Californian was there to perfect her singing. They were all of them young, but the crowd wasn't the same. The twenty pensionaires of Signora Gloria of my days had been students of the arts. There wasn't a wedding in the neighborhood at which we had not sung or played. There wasn't a fiesta to which we had not contributed our part. There wasn't a corner which we had not explored. The whole neighborhood of the Via Ticinese had known the guests of Signora Gloria for what they were, glorious young scamps, and loved them. But these students discussed Mussolini and commented upon him not unfavorably. It all seemed so flat. They talked about the rise and fall of the lira. We had never had such things to talk about. We fought about the merits of d'Annunzio and Petrarch, Bach and Beethoven.

When I returned to the heart of the city I noticed something had happened within the few hours.

There were more gendarmes and carbineers than usual, and black-shirted individuals were brushing and pushing and elbowing the crowds on the street. Who didn't wear a black shirt was an enemy.

What had happened? Another attempt upon Mussolini's life. I thought it strange that whenever Mussolini's popularity was in danger of diminishing, there should be an attempt made on his life. Really, these would-be assassins timed their attempts when it was most favorable to the Duce. He had emerged from every one of these attempts safe, and the hysteria created hoisted him higher in the estimation of the public.

Meanwhile, under the arcades black-shirted individuals were walking between the tables of the terraces of the cafés, scanning everybody and giving the Fascist salute when they were in doubt about some one. Black-shirted women acted even more brutally than the men.

Caught in the wave of humanity, pushed this way and that, I finally reached the Palazzo dei Banchieri in the heart of the city. Large crowds had collected there and were cheering the picture of the blacksmith's son. As if by magic, large posters were covering the walls announcing the resolution of the Government to reinstitute the death penalty for crimes against the safety of the government. The Milanese cheered. Being less Italian than Italians, they had to act more patriotically, just as a newly accepted member of the church has to be more

Catholic than the Pope. The tragedies of a cosmopolitan city are many and not all of them are comical.

"E viva Mussolini!" the crowd bellowed. "E viva Italia!" the crowd shrieked.

Like dogs baying on the traces of a quarry, they whipped out in many directions, eager for a kill, eager for blood to avenge the attempt on the life of their god. The crowd wanted a circus and lions to devour some martyrs.

Back at the hotel, my journalistic friend, who had been waiting, advised me to leave Milan on the next train.

"But why?" I asked.

"It isn't healthy for you to stay here."

"What have I done?"

"You said things," he answered, looking away.

"Well, I said things to you."

"You didn't say things only to me. The little bellboy has most certainly reported you to his section. Take my advice and leave."

"All he could have reported me for was that I offered him money to sing. Is that a great sin? Be reasonable. I don't want to stay, yet . . . I don't want to feel I had to go."

"Come, let us not lose much time. There is a train at five o'clock in the morning. The hotelkeeper has been kind enough to give me your key. I have already packed you. He also is afraid. Now, now, be reasonable." I wanted to protest more violently against this summary expulsion from a city, for I understood now that my friend acted on some authority, but at that moment the noise under my window increased. There were inhuman yells and screams. My friend grew pale.

"I hope it isn't for you."

I looked out of the window. The street was black with the rabble of a velling, screaming throng. They passed the door of the hotel and went a little farther. A few moments later they emerged from the inside of a little house carrying in their midst a protesting old man, still in his long white nightgown. And as he turned around, the light thrown by the moon on his face helped me recognize the old cobbler I had seen in the afternoon working outside on the street with his back leaning against the wall. He had been denounced by some one as an anti-Fascist. He had been telling every one he had once belonged to the same socialistic group with Mussolini and he hadn't changed his opinions. This old cobbler had once been a friend of Mussolini's father, and he had been denounced for saying that Mussolini would have had to throw his father in jail if he were still alive; the old blacksmith would never have turned his coat. The long white nightgown was blood stained. Pane e Circe! Pane e Circe! Throw him to the lions. Mussolini is in the arena.

The hounds had found their kill.

Escorted by my journalist friend, I went to the

railroad station, where my passport, my baggage, and my person were submitted to a most minute examination by the officials and by a man whose only badge of officiality was his black shirt.

When the train was set in motion, I stuck my head out of the window and yelled at the top of my voice:

"Good-by, Milan! Good-by, forever!"

Some time later, while discussing the Milan affair with a friend of mine in Paris, the man told me:

"You don't know how lucky you were. Manole has denounced many a former friend to the police. It is quite possible that he first denounced you and then was sorry for having done so; and got you out of the country before the machinery which he had set in motion had got you. The next time you go to Italy beware of that turncoat journalist."

Why go there at all?

Milan, the tomb of my youth. Milano, the tomb of Italy's youth.



COPENHAGEN

HAMLETS



THE MELANCHOLY DANES LIVE ON NUMBERS

COPENHAGEN

HAMLETS

When I left Paris for Copenhagen, I was warned that it was the rainy season there. Yet Ivan Opfer, the painter and son of the famous Danish journalist, Emile Opfer, told me that it was the only season to see Copenhagen. Ivan himself, who lives in Paris, is never happier than when it rains. He never carries an umbrella nor wears a raincoat. I have seen him on rainy days on the deserted streets of Paris, shaking his huge frame with the delight of a duck that has just come out of water. The heavier the rain the better he liked it.

I arrived in Copenhagen one gray afternoon to see how people, scurrying in the streets, all dressed in heavy oil-coats and rain-caps, which made them look like so many deep-sea divers, made it difficult to distinguish sexes and social conditions.

It seemed I had discovered an under-water city; that the sea had just withdrawn and left streets and houses upon its bottom sands. And though I shivered because the moisture of the air penetrated through my clothes, the other people seemed most comfort-

able and in their element. It made me think that they would be as uncomfortable as fishes out of water should the sun make an appearance. Rubber boots, oilskin coats, black rubber caps, the persistent smell of sea-weed and sea-fish, and the continual splashing sound of the sheets of rainfall on the ground—that was my first impression of Copenhagen.

I questioned why people should have chosen such a place to make their homes when there are so many wide stretches of land on which the sun beats almost continually!

At the hotel the waiter thought it extraordinary and wasteful when I asked to have some fire in the white porcelain stove embedded in the wall. When he provided it, and a bright wood-fire was burning lustily, vapors began to float right under the ceiling, and the covers and sheets of my bed, warming rapidly, began to steam. A half-hour after the fire was lit my room was a Turkish steam-bath. My waiter laughed at my discomfiture. It wasn't the season for fire, he explained. Still, it didn't take long, and the room, bright, warm, and cheery, was ready to receive the announced visit of a Danish artist whom I had met in Paris, and who had begged me to call on him any time I should come to Copenhagen. Knudsen knocked at my door and filled the room with his buoyant presence and oilskin, fish-skin rubber odor.

I had called him the "sad Dane" in Paris, for

in two summer months I had never seen him smile or laugh once. However, his ruddy face was now wreathed in smiles, his eyes were the color of a laughing blue, and his voice was loud, sonorous, and fresh. He welcomed me warmly.

"Tell me," I asked him, "were you sick or un-

happy while in Paris?"

"No," he answered. And then with a wry face he explained: "But it was sunny all the time. It is terrible."

He said this with the same accent I and others only too frequently complain of continuous rain. When Knudsen had thrown his coat off and put his hat down, I saw he was faultlessly attired in evening dress; not in tuxedo but full dress—black tie, tight gloves, and patent-leather shoes, which he had worn under his boots. I remembered the sort of provincial formality of the Danes I had met in New York, in Paris, and elsewhere.

"I am taking you to a concert," Knudsen said. "There is good music to-day. But you must dress. We shall eat a standing dinner, for we have only little time."

I shall say little of the food, for tastes and digestions differ. We bolted down the greasy heavy things as if they were medicinal bullets. The celebrated Danish pastry is considerably better outside of Denmark; but the beer was good, even though it did smell a little of herring mingled with cheese and oil.

We hopped into a taxi and pressed rapidly through a labyrinth of streets, by the Freukirke, the Glypothek, the Thorwaldsen Museum, and the university. The kaleidoscopic view of the city, the sudden spires jutting out as if from nowhere, made me think of a Byzantian architecture gone Nordic; smacking a little of Moscow and Constantinople. Copenhagen, the Byzantium of the North.

When the car stopped in front of the concert-hall and I jumped out to shelter myself under the archway until my friend had joined me, I was immediately recognized as a stranger; for I wore none of the oily rubber accounterments of the others. Sympathetic voices of milk-fed women spoke of neuralgias and rheumatisms.

The wind changed. The rain, which had been falling obliquely to the right, began to fall to the left. An unsupportable odor of souring milk, fermenting cheese, and sweetish barn offals thickened the air. Knudsen, joining me, opened his nostrils wide and inhaled deeply, with great delight, the floating perfumes.

"What is it?" I asked him. "Where does the smell come from?"

"It comes from the Trifolium, the biggest dairy in the world. You only get this beautiful odor on evenings like these when the air travels low." And then, as he saw my wry face, he said with astonishment: "Why, don't you like it? All Copenhagen loves it."

I noticed how the others lingered in the doorway to catch a whiff of the scented air.

"No. I like perfumes of a different scent."

I am a great lover of music. I don't hesitate to say I understand music. I have spent many years studying the art. I have heard good, bad, and indifferent music played well, badly, and indifferently. I have heard indifferent music played excellently, almost so well that its deficiencies were covered. And I have heard great music played so badly, its greatness was marred by the execution.

I didn't know what was really happening in the concert-hall at Copenhagen. I attributed first my annoyance to the fishy odor which hung like a pall over the audience, and the sickening rustle, like the flapping of fishes' tails, of the clothes under the seats of the audience. The great music was played well and exactly, but with a mechanistic manner that made me think of the factory—as if so many perfect machines had been seated on the platform with a super-machine directing them. The flaw was not in the playing but in the conception, the mechanistic conception of the music. These Danes played as they lived. If anything, they played the dreary passages well, very well. But every burst of sunshine or joy in the music was immediately repressed. I thought of my friend Knudsen's sadness during the sunny days of Paris and his oily happiness in Copenhagen.

Bach succeeded Beethoven and was played with even greater heaviness. The musicians strove to take all the happiness out of the score. Dreary, heavy sadness was the maximum quality to be attained.

I hoped that the "Don Juan" overture of Mozart might wring some sunniness from the hearts of the players. But it was in vain. Excellent people, wonderful hosts, well-meaning and stanch friends, but they hated sunshine. They hated color. Their reds were brown. Their greens were dark blue. And they didn't know what white or silver was. Everything was gray, brown, and dark blue.

When we left the concert-hall the streets and shops were brilliantly lit and the prismatic colors produced by the raindrops upon the light-bulbs played on walls and pavements, reflecting and mirroring the inverted houses and spires that trembled on the pavement.

We entered a café on the Oestergade and had difficulty in finding a table. A ladies' orchestra played perfunctorily some classical music. A redfaced, freckled, bespectacled, red-haired woman, who blew her cheeks out wide while pumping air into a saxophone, looked very serious and ridiculous when she tried later to give some of the jazz spirit to the new piece by shaking her enormous shoulders.

The Danes thought she was immense, *Kolossal!* and spoke of Paris and New York. There were hundreds of people in the hall, seemingly enjoying themselves, drinking huge tanks of beer and sipping

red wine from tall heavy glasses. A few bewhiskered older men looked mournfully into enormous cups of black coffee. There was music, light, there were women, and yet the whole crowd was stamped with gloom, the gloom of perfunctoriness; as if these people had come to the café not because they wished to enjoy a few hours' leisure, but because it was de riqueur to do so at certain hours and days of the week. Their gaiety was factorylike, regulated by whistle and police; like the cannon-shot at four o'clock in the afternoon which announces every day that the Royal Library and Folke Museum is open; like the immense milk farms, the Hasley and the Trifolium, with their thirty thousand cows that looked more like breathing milk factories than animals.

I remembered I had seen a young lady at the Glypothek, at the Art Museum, stand in front of a celebrated picture with watch in hand. An art student, her teacher had told her one must stay in front of that picture at least three-quarters of an hour in order to understand it.

And then, also, I understood the inscription over the Royal Theater: "Ej blot til Lyst" (Not merely for enjoyment). There wasn't anything in Copenhagen for so trifling a desire, Joy. . . . And yet, there were so many beautiful women. The women were the most beautiful Nordic specimens I had seen, even if they were a trifle heavy and too big. Their eyes were inviting and their gestures so envel-

oping, yet the Danes did not seem to give a tumble for their existence. Perhaps this is ample explanation of the great number of women's organizations in Denmark. Where men are gallant, women don't organize themselves apart. No, they don't when they are happy in the company of the opposite sex, or when men show them how happy they are in their company.

Shakespeare was a deep observer of mankind. Only a Dane could have been as indifferent to woman as *Hamlet* was known to be. Who knows whether there isn't something to be said in favor of his astute and energetic mother!

But it was eleven o'clock and Knudsen began to look nervously at his watch. I remembered how we had sat up till the wee hours of the morning in a Paris café discussing art and literature. He hadn't minded it then, but now that he was in Copenhagen the fixed-hour habit had got hold of him again. It was eleven o'clock and he had to go home.

I insisted I wanted to be alone. The music stopped abruptly. Within a few minutes the café had emptied itself save for three other people besides myself. Two men and a woman were talking in whispers at the opposite end of the place—visitors like myself, evidently.

At the door I met a uniformed guide who after a short conversation agreed to take me to a place near the Holmen's Kirke, the Naval Church. The rain had ceased. We slushed through streets, stopping

here and there to look into shop windows filled, most of them, with smoking paraphernalia, rainyweather wear, and porcelain-ware.

I had always admired the Copenhagen porcelain and pottery, but seeing so much of it killed the taste forever. The mere sight of Danish faïences makes me shiver on the warmest day. Copenhagen pottery. Dutch wooden shoes. English pipes. French art exhibitions. Egyptian pyramids. I am through with them forever and a day.

Elsewhere, guides have always gabbed about artistic collections and historical importance, but this guide just filled me with numbers. He compared the number of churches in Copenhagen with the number of churches in Stockholm; the number of museums in Denmark with the number of museums in Oslo. He knew the number of libraries, the number of cows, the number of workingmen in the factories, the number of societies against disease, against crime, against oppression, and the number of pieces of porcelain issued by each of the big porcelain factories of Copenhagen. Had I let him go on, he would have told me the number of bricks in each house and the total of them, and the square inches of pavement of the city.

Yet I learned to understand something that had puzzled me. Every musician of the orchestra of the concert-hall could probably tell me the number of notes in every piece. The great value of the leader lay in the fact that he knew the total number of all the notes better than anybody else. Perhaps most of the gentlemen I had watched in the café, before going to bed, would total on a special register the number of words they had spoken. Numbers, rules, and regulations seemed to be uppermost in the mind of every one.

My ears filled with talk of hundreds of thousands, of millions and billions, we finally arrived at the Neger café, where the young bloods of Denmark were disporting themselves. Seated upon a raised platform in the far end of a low-ceilinged hall, three negroes strummed sleepily at some banjos, while the saddest-faced negro I ever saw was beating the drum, and a chocolate-colored matron was pounding the piano. The Neger café was reeking with smoke and stale beer and was fragrant with the odors of a hundred kinds of pipe tobacco. The audience was a young one, mostly in student caps. And the women, young and pretty, smoked incessantly while they tempted their companions to dance. How hard they tried to be gay, these young men; but they tried without success. It was well-nigh impossible to vanquish an inherent torpor and slowness. The pulse of the world was beating on the doors of their senses, yet they could not open. Spain, France, England had answered, but Denmark could not respond.

Some young men did get up to dance with the girls, but they only dragged their feet. There was no spring to them, no flexibility, no rhythm. It was factory dancing, the dance in which numbers and

not grace counted. I looked at the poor negroes and wondered what had brought them from sunny countries to this clammy atmosphere. They looked pale. There is nothing sadder than the pallor of a negro. They looked warm from the exertion and lack of sunshine. Their efforts were frantic. The incisive beat of the drum could have raised the dead to dance. But the Danes. . . . Well, they didn't.

A comely blonde smoked her cigarette, looking defiantly at me. Her companion, a young student, looked as if God had started making a beautiful specimen but had suddenly grown tired and tossed the thing aside before He had finished it.

Was it the wine or the desire to break the monotony, cost what it may, that made me approach the table and bow conventionally to the man, asking his permission to invite the young lady to dance? . . . I who had never danced before!

In a few minutes all eyes were riveted on us. I was actually executing the difficult steps I had watched people do in Harlem. The young lady's face blushed pleasantly. She leaned closely, abandoning herself.

One of the negroes called out: "Atta boy!" Happy that they had found some one to dance to their rhythms, the jazzers began to play with more gusto and zest than they had played before.

The colored woman at the piano turned half around as she played, and encouraged me, yelling: "Shake that leg!"

One of the banjo-players jumped down from the platform and began to do a Charleston all by himself. The whole place was in an uproar, an indescribable gaiety having taken hold of the youths. They began to dance. Soon a second banjo-player came down from his platform. The drum-player took the place of the dusky lady at the piano, who, raising her skirt, began to do a few steps.

My dancing companion looked at me admiringly. I pressed her closer to me and whirled and danced, yelling at the top of my voice in answer to the call of the negroes. These sunny people in a cold, frozen

atmosphere deserved to be warmed up.

Some one tapped me on the shoulder. It was my guide, who, cap in hand, was dutifully informing me that it was eighteen minutes past one. He just had time for the last tram going in the direction of his home; and wouldn't I pay him? I gave him money without counting, not to be interrupted, but he insisted on giving me a receipt. He would not live out the night if he didn't give me a receipt.

At half-past one the drum-player stopped beating his drum. It reminded me of the cannon-ball-shot at four o'clock announcing that the library and mu-

seum were open.

When I asked one of the negroes whether he couldn't go on playing, he leaned forward and, grinning a smile that stretched from ear to ear, said: "I'se tellin' yuh somethin', suh. If pro'bition done hit dis country, yuh couldn't get a glass of any-

thin' 's long as yuh live. Dem heah people is Godfo'saken law-abidin'!"

But my night had only begun. I took the negroes to the hotel, to my room, where we sat up the whole night talking of this and that, but especially of Harlem and sunshine, and of Georgia and Miami, and the golden warm sand on the beach. And then watermelons and sunshine again. The souls of these poor fellows had become frozen and clammy in Copenhagen.

"But what brought you here?" I asked them.

"A contract," one answered. "We done broke a contract in Paris to come heah. But yuh can't break a contract in dis country. No suh! Them people keeps yuh to what yuh've signed, and it's two more months to run."

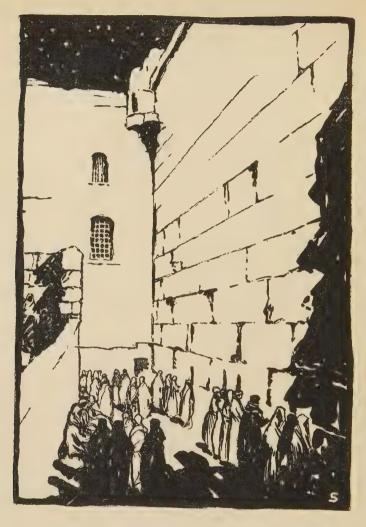
"Two more months?" interrupted the drumplayer, his eyes bulging out of his head until the white had come out like a field of gray silver. "It ain't two more months. Unless yuh done cross us somewheres. It's just fifty-six days. It am been fiftyseven years to-day!"

"Yeah," the other said. "Don't yuh tell me no two months. Two months am sixty-one days."

I remembered the answer of a negro in a chaingang on the causeway between Miami and Miami Beach. He too had fifty-six more days to go: "One thousan' three hundred 'n' fo'ty-fo' hours an' thirtysix minutes, suh, befo' them feet am free again."



JERUSALEM THE VALUE OF TEARS



THE WAILING WALL OF THE JEWS

JERUSALEM

THE VALUE OF TEARS

Was it on such a night that Asa ben Miriam appeared in the Holy City to dispute the interpretation of the law with the men of the Sanhedrim? It was raining, and the donkey and myself were drenched and caked with the mud we had gathered slipping and falling up and down the wet hills on the way to Jerusalem.

Yet, though the rain was pouring heavily and it was late at night, the sky was as blue as the skies of Italy and of our own California on the clearest of summer evenings. Through the mist of the falling rain the clusters of domes and spires shivered in the distance.

A faint rumbling sound of unearthly voices singing unearthly languages struck my ears. I had come to Jerusalem steeled against any traditional sentimentality. I had deliberately, consciously shed the knowledge of the spirit of holiness which envelops the Holy City. I was prepared to see it with cold eyes. I had been there during the day and had made mental notes of the slime, brine, the dirt, and the

beggars, and had laughed out aloud several times when my guide had attempted to impress upon me the holiness of this, that, and the other place. I had not been able to control my risibilities even before the Wailing Wall. The Phenician architecture of the Solomonic temple and what remains of it had meant nothing more than a pile of débris of soft stone, and the jumble of the later architectural layers of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Byzantines could not be made beautiful by the old names appended to the heaps.

The watchman guarding King David's tomb outside the Zion Gate, pacing up and down, ankle-deep in mud, had looked no different from a sentinel in front of a soldier's hut. The mosque of Aksa and Kait were no more awe-inspiring than other mosques I had seen in Moslem countries. Stripped of the glory poets and writers had wreathed upon the brow of this pile of débris, I had wondered whether any traveler would have stopped to look at the thing twice on his way to somewhere. I was still in that mood that night. I refused to be impressed. Jerusalem had been overadvertised. The weather, the cold, and the discomfort had sharpened my resentment and my anger.

Suddenly a bell rang in the distance—a bell from one of the churches on one of the four hills upon which Jerusalem is perched; and all my being began to vibrate as if the sound of that bell had struck a dormant sympathetic chord in myself. I wanted to

tell myself that I had merely slipped again on the wet ground, but as the bell continued to ring, I was on my knees, my arms crossed over my chest, my head bent low in prayer—in deep prayer for the first time in my life.

The rain ceased. I had been told that that was the last day of the rainy season. From afar I heard the tramping feet of men. Soon, with a chanting priest at the head of them, a hundred strangely spiritualized faces, walking in measured steps, chanting softly, passed me by. Not one of them seemed taken aback at the sight of a man kneeling by the road-side. And nobody looked at me when I joined the tail-end of the procession, leading the donkey behind me.

I left the procession at the cross-roads. I wanted to be alone again. I wanted to be alone that I might experience again the same sharp sensation I had experienced a moment ago, when the bell had rung. A group of Moslems passed by, and a moment later a large group of wailing Jewish women and men ambled down the street, bending low and kissing the ground on which they walked.

The houses were dark, but here and there an occasional small candle-light or oil lamp burned at a window. Jerusalem, so quiet just a while ago, began to swarm with people coming from all directions. The streets which had been like the dry bed of a river looked now as if the flood-gates had been opened suddenly.

Was it on such a night that Asa ben Miriam had first come to Jerusalem?

A tall, lean, black-bearded, pale man, with burning eyes, dressed in a long black *kaftan* which reached to his ankles, stopped in a corner of the road and began to preach very loudly in an unknown tongue. Passing women stopped to listen and their eyes lit up at his magnetic gestures, which seemed to embrace the whole world. Not understanding what he said, they looked at one another. A few men joined the group. An older man crossed the muddy street from the other side and apostrophized the Jewish women angrily.

"Go way, women! Don't listen to what he is preaching. What he says is blasphemy!" Raising his knotted stick he pushed the crowd forward; even as lambs being driven by a shepherd. The black-bearded man spread his arms wider and continued preaching to the bare walls, until a stone thrown at him by an unseen hand struck his chest. He picked up the missile, wiped it clean, kissed it, put it in his pocket, and went away happy, as if the stone were a gift sent to him by the heavens—the very thing he had been hoping for.

I stopped to talk to him. I tried him out in many tongues, but he knew only one, which I didn't understand—an Arabic dialect. Yet by the similarity of sound I knew he was repeating to me personally all that he had said across the road to the large audience of non-understanding women.

Was it to crowds like these that the man from Nazareth had preached?

With the donkey between us, we reached the rocky promontory of Mount Zion, where my companion threw his arms about me, and kissing first my forehead, kissed my shoes while looking up to the heavens to make the Eternal One a witness to his humiliation.

An hour after the rain had stopped, the blue of the sky was sprinkled with silver and a big moon kinged on the heavens. All the odors of the gardens around Jerusalem, of field flowers and roses, and the scent of fruit buds had been released. Living perfumes traveled in low mist in the air.

From the Mohammedan quarters emerged a long, gaunt woman. Her unveiled face was lacerated, her breasts were hanging out of her torn upper garment. Though running at top speed, she was shrieking at the top of her voice: "Ya naredna hurri!" (I am a repentant woman!) "Allah-zain." (God have pity on me.) Shrieking and running straight ahead of her, heedless of the people to her right and to her left, tearing her hair and beating her heart, gesticulating wildly, she modulated her voice as she disappeared in the distance. I could hear her cry above the rumble and voices of other people. It was now a beautiful chant. "Ya naredna hurri! Allahzain."

In the Armenian quarter, on David's Road, close by the Patriarchal Palace, two young Armenians were disputing with two young Italians the merits of their churches. I inquired from one of the Armenians where I could lodge my donkey overnight, so I could visit the palace of Caiaphas and see the room in which the Last Supper had taken place.

We were near the Jaffa Gate. The young Armenian, polite and well dressed, detached himself from the group and offered to show me the way, walking beside me. I wondered where he was leading me, for he had passed many likely places but he hadn't stopped at any of them, and was taking me farther into narrow, winding, deserted streets strewn with wet dirt and garbage. In front of the church of the Gethsemane my companion suddenly broke and began to run at the approach of a man at the bend of the roadway. The man threw his stick at him and ran quite a little way, yelling at the top of his voice, but the Armenian disappeared around the corner. The man came to talk to me.

"You are a stranger. You are jeopardizing your life joining any of these scamps who fester and pollute the Holy City."

Stroking the head of the donkey, for the poor shivering animal had become very restless, the man continued to talk to me in Levantine French.

"I know what you are looking for: shelter for the poor animal and perhaps for yourself. Or is it that you intend to see Jerusalem at night? Pray to your God; for had I not met you, somebody would have soon been praying for your soul."

"But who are you?" I inquired.

"I am an official guide. I have a bismeh, an authorization," and he fumbled for something in his pocket to prove what he said. "Here it is." Taking hold of the donkey's halter, he led the way without waiting for an answer.

"It is best we leave the Armenian quarter behind. That scamp may overtake us with his friends, the cutthroats of Jerusalem," he explained. "Let's go back to the Mohammedans, to honest people. I know a place not far from the Mekhemeh, the square, where we can shelter the poor donkey with an honest Mohammedan, a friend of mine. And from there, after we have refreshed ourselves, for I am both hungry and thirsty, effendi, and so are you, we shall pass through the quarter of the Mughrevi, negroes, and go to the wailing-place. The new moon is out and it is prayer evening for the Jews. The rain has washed away all the impurities around the wall. The odor will be sweeter to-night than it will be to-morrow."

How efficiently he took possession of me, this self-appointed guide! He was a man of about fifty, with a wiry and gray beard, and a neckless head that sat upon tremendously wide shoulders, as those of a hamal, a street-porter of Constantinople.

Our donkey was soon sheltered by a man who insisted that the price for the night must be paid in advance. He was a Greek and answered to all my arguments with: "Echis denechis prepina pirosis."

(You must pay whether you want to or not.) The money had no sooner passed from my hand into the hand of the stable-keeper, when Ali, my guide, put his hand out for the commission due him. And the fight between the two was on; the donkey was threatened with eviction, and the money I had paid was half-way handed back to me. The Greek thought the commission demanded was too high. After Ali had got his share and we had walked out, he said to me:

"Oh, these thieves! He wanted to cheat me."

"But, Ali," I suggested, "hasn't he already asked twice as much because he knew you would ask commission?"

"Would it have been better for you to have lain a corpse in some gutter because an unofficial guide accompanied you? And I have a wife and children," Ali answered.

How well we understood one another!

In an open square in the bright light of the moon, Ali examined me closely. His examination over, he suggested: "And perhaps it is not the Wailing Wall you want to see. There would be great gaiety at Kefresilwan to-night, and you who come from so far might perhaps want a little gaiety. For," said he with a twinkle in his eye, "Jerusalem is not only a city of tears and prayers. People live here also." And to reinforce what he had said, he added: "If the gentleman has ever read the Koran, he will permit me to recall to him a phrase which reads:

'And they shall answer to God for the joys they have not taken in life.'"

Processions of groups went past singing the praises of God in several tongues. Russians on one side, nuns on the other, followed by bearded Jews, wild dervishes, lanky Arabs, passed us by in rapid succession, ignoring one another's existence, vet leaving a distinct impression that the slightest contact would start a conflagration. When we changed our direction, these processions became thinner and thinner, the last one being a group of a dozen African negroes coming from the Magrubin mosque, dancing and shouting very much like our own negroes at a revival meeting. A few women stopped in their tracks to listen to a voice no one else but they themselves could hear. "These Magrubis have a secret faith of their own," Ali explained. "When the new moon appears, they go to one of the caverns in the subterranean passage under the hill of Zahara. What they do there, no one knows, yet later on we shall see them in Silwan. And though they don't drink, for they are Moslems, although their women are unveiled, they shall act as drunk as if they had lain under some full wine barrel and emptied it."

Talking and listening to my guide, who pointed out many real and fictitious monuments and told interesting stories at every step, it was long past midnight when we had reached the cliff of Mount Olivet. On the way, several people had greeted my guide. He whispered something in Arabic to them and sent them off in different directions. An Englishman and his wife were walking the same direction as myself, preceded by a guide who in broken English gave information as lying as that given me by my guide.

"That a man and his wife should want to go there," Ali repeated several times. "For surely I would not take mine, though it is proper for a man to go anywhere so that he may get some relaxation. But one never can understand these *Ingleze*. They always want to visit the most unlikely places."

We were suddenly in an open square. The domes, the minarets, and spires were at our feet. Lights and loud noises pierced through the cracks of closed doors of shops. Windows were opened and heads of white and negro women appeared. They knew Ali and addressed him by his name, and I understood by the tone of voices that they were inviting him to come in with his friend. Ali shook his head. When we had made the round of the square, my guide said:

"I know a place you will like. But I must give some one a dollar before we are allowed in." When the dollar was safe in his pocket, he pushed me forward into an alley and threw open a door in a low dive not unlike many on the outskirts of Paris. The room, square and low-ceilinged, was thick with smoke and heavy with the odor of twenty unwashed bodies of men and women and stale drink and cheap perfumes. A blind Gipsy, sitting on the floor, was

playing upon a reed-pipe. A huge, bulky mulatto woman was swaying back and forth doing a belly dance. Bare to the waist, the sweat pearled down her immense arms and shoulders. A half-dozen men, sitting on their haunches around her, were beating the rhythm with their open palms. In a corner of the room a red-haired, pale girl, half drunk, was combing the gray beard of a venerable-looking Armenian. She was sitting on his knees, an arm wound about his neck. In another corner two disheveled, half-naked women were fighting for the sole rights to the drinks and the attention of an amused young Arab. Two goats clattered between the tables, bucking and ducking. There were not two men or two women of the same nationality.

Ali loudly ordered the Greek waiter to clean the table for us.

"You will remember I told you I was both hungry and thirsty. Perhaps you also are hungry . . . and if you wish for relaxation. . . ."

Was it on a night like this that Asa ben Miriam preached against iniquity and sin in the house of a publican?

The tall, esthetic-looking preacher who had so piously put the stone thrown at him into his pocket appeared at the door. The dancing-woman stopped dancing. The *hurris* who had been sitting on the laps of men, holding their beards and whispering in their ears, became quiet and sedate. Only the blind Gipsy continued playing his flute. The Greek waiter made

a brusk movement to evict the intruder, but the dancing-woman, after covering her naked body with the shawl tied around her hips, protested. "Let him be! Don't touch him."

The tall Arab began to preach. The women looked at him with raptured eyes. His warm voice rang vibrant. The purity of the sound transformed the impure dive into a holy place. Tears streamed down the eves of the women. The men began to fidget uneasily with knives, glasses, and forks. The Armenian whose beard had been combed by the woman acted like a child caught stealing jam from the cupboard. And yet the preacher talked to no one in particular. A soft smile uncovered a row of white, clean teeth, as small as those of a girl. The thick smoke of the room dissolved itself against the ceiling. One of the women, talking French, leaned her head against me, in the attitude of a tired child, and said: "I don't understand what he says, but his voice tells the whole story. Does it make you feel ashamed of being here? Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!"

The music of the flute followed the rhythm of the speaker.

The voice of the Greek waiter rose angrily and broke the spell: "That is enough!" Pulling the flute out of the hand of the Gipsy, he touched the preacher's shoulder with it and showed him the door.

"Go, go, go. This is no church or mosque. Men come here for relaxation." This time no one pro-

tested. When the door was closed, the mulatto woman danced with greater abandon than before. Like a mechanical doll whose movements had been halted by some temporary defect in the mechanism, the red-haired girl continued to comb the beard of the venerable-looking Armenian.

Was it in a place like this that Asa ben Miriam mingled with publicans?

Who knows whether it was not in the very same place, whether it was not from there that He walked to the Haram and from there to the Temple?

Before dawn we reached the wailing-place. In black kaftans and prayer-shawls, and dress and garb of a dozen countries, hundreds of men and women pressed their bodies and faces against the holy stones, beating the wall with their hands, crying out loudly not only their own pains but the pains of the ancestors of their ancestors. Shrill wailing voices of women mingled with deep sobs and broken tones of older men. Every pitch and every tonality and every accent was used to find the nuance that would please more the God which had spread, but not sown, His people over the whole face of the earth. The long rain had helped the moss to grow between the stones. If the ground had not absorbed all the tears that had been shed in two thousand years at that very wall, how wide a river would have flowed into the Jordan from beneath this heap of stones! Moslems, Crusaders, the Greeks and the Romans, Phenicians and Persians, Syrians and Russians, have all disputed

them their heap of stones and the right to weep and cry. Building church against church, mosque against mosque, synagogue against synagogue, mingling tower with tower and spire with spire, and wetting the whole ground with blood to assert their faith and belief in the mildest of all Jews, and in the simplest of all camel-drivers, they have all disputed the Jew his right to the root place of his faith . . . and theirs.

The Englishman, his wife, and his guide stood at a respectful distance from the wall. The heavy sticks they carried in their hands became campchairs, and while the people wailed and cried, the angular gentleman took a little book from his pocket and, lighting its pages with a flash-light, read aloud to his wife the history of the wall they were seeing.

Ali was silent.

Detaching himself from a group of young people in ultra-modern clothes, a man in his early thirties approached me. "You don't know me, but we are neighbors," he said in New Yorkese. "What brought you here—just to see and look at things? How long are you going to be here?" I made some answer. "I? I arrived a few weeks ago. How is New York?"

After a while he became very confidential.

"I came here for sentimental reasons; you know. I am now living in Tel-Aviv, the modern section of Jerusalem; like Park Avenue. I only intended to stay here a few days, but I am going to stay a few months. Tel-Aviv has a great future. Even Jerusa-

lem has a great future. You have got to look at the thing in the right way. People come here every year. The climate is wonderful for eight months. If one wants to invest a few dollars, I can show you where he can make a little money. Right now there is a great boom in real estate in Tel-Aviv. And it is not going to be like in Florida. I lost money there.

"Say, wouldn't this place, right here, near the wall, be a wonderful spot for a real-estate office? Of course, I don't know whether it can be done. What do you say? Have lunch with me to-morrow in Tel-Aviv. Lots of nice people there. Perhaps we do some business. No? Well, just the same, come for lunch."

How deaf and blind he was to the wailing around him; to the two thousand year old drama played incessantly before a deaf world! He had come there for sentimental reasons!

Day was breaking.

Was it on a morning like this that Asa ben Miriam used a whip on the money-changers in the court of the Temple?

Ali had disappeared. I never was able to find the stable where the donkey had been parked for the night.

From afar I heard the loud cry of the Turkish woman. "Ya naredna hurri! Allah-zain." I pressed my face against the stone wall still warm with the tears of the man who had preceded me.



ATHENS GREEK GODS



IN THE SHADOW OF THE ACROPOLIS

ATHENS

GREEK GODS

As my father's sight had failed him early in life, I had to read aloud in the evenings from Sophocles and Euripides, Socrates and Plato. Thus, before I was ten years old, I knew Plato's Republic by heart, without understanding the first thing about it, and could read in Greek Demosthenes' Philippics faultlessly before I was twelve years old. In recompense for my efforts, I listened to Father's descriptions of Athens, and to tales from Greek mythology, which he colored fantastically with Persian legends and Hebrew lore. While the winter wind shrieked and wolves howled, Father spoke of the gold of the Grecian sun: of the warmth of the Ionic sea; of blooming olive and orange groves; of boats spreading red, blue, and yellow sails fluttering in the breeze; of the shore of Piræus in the shadow of the Acropolis and the Parthenon.

I landed in Piræus late one summer afternoon, and felt feverishly exalted. Barrels of olives that were loaded on one-horse wagons transformed themselves into columns of gray marble; half-naked,

grubby urchins, selling newspapers and picture postcards, appeared like angels; and the barefooted, hefty women, carrying wooden water-buckets on their heads, looked like odalisques ascending the holy hills. I was living over my father's tales, repeopling them with the figures on the street, who, unbeknown to themselves, acted spiritually such rôles as I assigned to them, while in reality they were going about prosaic daily errands.

Suddenly, at a bend of the tree-planted road leading from Piræus to Athens, a high semicircle of ruddy rocks, dominated by lofty columns, discovered itself to my eyes. My heart stopped beating. When I opened my eyes again, the even evening light illuminated the whole stretch of the Attica; bordered by the majestic lines of the Hymettus mountain range were olive forests, spread in rolling green-gold folds, like a forest of praying priests at the foot of an altar.

Sprawling in the valley, the low white-painted houses of Athens hid in the shadow of trees, veiling themselves with clambering roses, while climbing ivies framed doors and windows and led over the roofs to twine about the red bricks of the chimneys.

Night was falling when I entered Athens, the cradle of European civilization. Near the Pnyx and the Areopagus, below the gates of the Nymphs, rocked by the waters of the Ilissus, ugly modern tenement-houses have replaced the temples and the stately homes of the Greeks of yore; as if squares of

New York or Chicago, discarded twenty years ago, had been dumped down carelessly by wreckers and vandals. On the exact site of an old temple stands the villa of a wealthy merchant. A few columns of rose-hued marble, at the back of the house, are there only thanks to the forgetfulness of the wrecker. A piece from a broken column serves as a choppingblock for the cook; another piece of marble has been ingeniously transformed into a grass-roller. In the shadow of the antique octagonal "Tower of the Winds," huddled near the ground are rows of tinplate-roofed garages, leaning against the portico of one of Minerva's temples. A little farther to the right some of the newer villas imitate the old Greek style; but Greek imitating Greek is worse than Greek meeting Greek.

I fairly cried with rage, for they had destroyed something which belonged to me, something which had been ours since the beginning of time. A little later, as the evening wore on, beneath a sky so blue and so intensely sprinkled with blinking silver dots as to appear artificial, after I had passed the Corinthian-columned and triangularly crowned porticos of Hadrian, I came upon the magnificent ruins of the temple of the Olympian Jupiter. I forgot my hatred. I was grateful to the Athenians for not having built one of their ugly houses in its place; just as I was grateful that night to France for having saved the monument built by Lysicrates, Alexander of Macedon's sculptor, and having surrounded it by

a wall to protect it from vandalism and destruction; however, not before the bronze tripod on top of the monument had been stolen.

Ah! The ugly things of brick and stone which stand where once stood the homes of Cicero and Atticus, where Demosthenes spoke and Plato. Where was the tree-bordered road where walked Socrates and Phaedo? Where was the gymnasium where Theophrastus and Carneades discussed their masters, and where Aristotle posed the principles of science which will never cease to agitate the human mind? Destroyed! Destroyed!

What still lives of old Greece is to be found in the cemetery of Ceramicus, monuments by master sculptors, carvings, engravings, columns, pedestals. These things live because the dead and not the living hold them in custody. The great age of Athens lives in that cemetery and not in the streets of the living.

Tired of the babel that came from the city, raucous calls, screeching sounds of gramophone records, and the crunching of tram-car wheels upon broken rails, I left the outskirts of Athens to visit the Thesean temple, high in the mountains. The road was deserted. The bark of the olive-trees spread a bitter-sweet, heavy perfume, lightened and made mysterious by the fragrance of field flowers and the wild roses in the hedges. A hundred springs babbled and rattled their silver tongues upon the pebbles of their beds. In low-roofed peasant homes voices were

singing old songs; melopees. The sirens of boats in the bay of Piræus called warnings to one another. Distance and darkness blotted out the ugliness of the city of Athens. Exhausted, I sat down beside one of the six heavy columns supporting the narrow frontal of the Theseum.

I don't know how long I sat there. An uncanny peace had come over me. Nothing mattered. A wild goat was filling itself up with the grass growing between the stones. A snake swerved between my feet and wriggled into its hole underneath the stone base of the temple. An escaped donkey, with its cord halter still dangling on its neck, was clattering its hoofs on the remains of what had once been the temple of Castor and Pollux. Its braying echoed through the theater of Bacchus, which had once echoed to the applause for Orestes, Antigone, Iphigenia and Andromache, and to the epopees and lyric chants which are still the chords of the world.

Suddenly my ears caught young human voices nearing. I withdrew behind a column, so as not to disturb the lovers. I could already hear their footsteps. I saw them coming. They were clad in white. They carried staffs, and walked with large, slow strides. The rhythm of their words pulsed through me, though I could not hear what they said. The moon emerged from behind a cloud. The two lovers came nearer and nearer, straight toward me. Serene. Noble. The two lovers silently circled the Theseum four times; and then, after following for a while

the wall of Themistocles, continued their way upward toward the Acropolis. An irresistible impulse compelled me to follow them, at a distance. Lovers. Greek lovers, who had escaped the contamination of modernity.

I hid behind a rock. When they reached the Acropolis they circled it once, bowing at the entrance, reverently; and then descended, still holding hands, taking the road by which they had come. I followed them back into the town. They walked silently. When they reached the boulevard of the university they stopped in front of a tall house. On one of the windows was a large sign, in black letters upon a white background: English Spoken. Pension de Famille.

"Shall we go up now, dearest?" the man asked in familiar New Yorkese.

"Don't know. . . . Eh, what do you say? Isn't it a little chilly?" the woman whimpered.

"I'll go up and bring you down a coat."

"O. K. Where do you want to go?"

"Let's go down to Jakiria's, at the Stade. The Smiths will be there with Lilian and the Reeds."

"I'll go up and powder my nose. It will only take a second."

"You are O. K. as you are. If you go up, you will stay an hour," the man reproached, "and it is almost midnight."

"I can't go like this," the woman remonstrated, and disappeared.

A while later the door opened again. The hands that had held the staffs lit cigarettes.

I followed them to Jakiria's at the Stade. Over the door of Jakiria's hung the sign, American Bar. There were two bars inside. One with brass rails for Americans, and one without rails for natives. The bartender behind the American counter was dressed in white and clean-shaven. The man behind the other counter was dirty and bearded. I recognized in the couple who had gone up to the Acropolis old friends from the Village. Lilian, the Smiths, the Reeds, and a dozen others gave Orestes and his companion a rousing welcome. They clinked glasses and shouted to one another.

"Hey, you, can you tell that dirty Greek, in Greek, to take his greasy fingers out of the glasses when he serves wine?"

"Ela Do," Orestes called to the waiter in Greek. But the waiter shook his head up and down, and replied in English:

"Yes, sir, 'nderstand, yes, sir."

Suddenly, Orestes Jones noticed me.

"In the name of Mike! . . . What are you doing here? That so? Well, well. See here, friends, look who is here. *Chiria*, *chiria*, *liga crassi*. Get some wine here. Sit down. When did you arrive? So, so. Whom did you last see? So; how is the old boy? Glad to hear it."

"This is a great old place," said Stephen Reed. "Seen everything, eh? Well, there is a dandy place

on Eole, kept by an old New York bartender. And that guy mixes a cocktail all his own."

"Did you get them, Lilian?" Jones addressed the

woman across my table.

"A hell of a town. Cannot get a decent jazz record. I got some, but it's jazz played by a French orchestra. No good. No snap. These French... my God! It looks as though Athens is just a suburb of Paris," and turning to me the woman asked: "Have you any jazz records in your baggage? No... thought so."

Jones continued an interrupted conversation. He wanted to know all about his friends he had not seen for a long time. He had left Greenwich Village

six months before.

"So 'Gene is well. That's good news. Have you seen Christine? How is she? Dear old red-headed soul!" Jones shoved aside the full glass of old wine and ordered whisky and soda for himself and his friends.

The native section was getting quieter. There was much hand-shaking and well-wishing. The Americans were getting noisier. They were homesick. They drank whisky and wanted jazz. Lilian swore she was leaving for Paris the following day. She knew a good negro orchestra there. Others came in. Noisy greetings. Cries. Lilian, who was becoming gayer and sadder every minute, inquired of every one who entered:

"Got a good jazz record?"

"Why are they all here?" I asked.

"Where else can you go? There are only two places in town," Jones answered.

"That's not what I meant."

"Heavens, what is there to do? No concerts. No theaters. No dancing. I cannot go to bed early. No one can. Heavens, we are not made that way!"

"Well, I saw you walk up the Acropolis to-

night."

"Yes... well... just go up there every night... distraction... fun... exercise...." He was almost ashamed of himself for being poetic... blushed... stammered. "Where are you staying? Don't know yet? Why don't you get a room in our joint? Decent, cheap. And they have a bath. Get that? They have a bath!"

I left. The night was not over yet, and it was warm and balmy out of doors. I wandered alone in the poorer districts of Athens, lingering over inscriptions on old stones, of temples and monuments now incorporated in the walls of houses and hovels. I stopped to talk to an old Greek priest who was cooling himself on the steps of his church after a long ride over the mountains, whither he had gone to administer the last rites to a dying man. At dawn I was again at the foot of the Hymettus Mountains; and after a short conversation with a farmer, we agreed upon the daily price for board and lodging.

"But tell me," the Greek farmer inquired, "you who have traveled so much, look over there at that

NIGHTS ABROAD

man in a long shirt, with a staff in his hand, coming down the hill. Is he wearing the American national costume? That man, and a dancing woman as well, and a few others who go up to the Acropolis every night, dress like that."

"It is . . . when they come to Greece, Patera."

And I went to sleep with the thought that it would be well to get a few jazz records for the crowd at Jakiria's.

HAVANA HARMONICS



HAVANA-WHERE ILLUSIONS ARE BORN

HAVANA

HARMONICS

I first saw her in Havana, where she was playing in the orchestra of the American Hotel. Leaning her dark head against the polished, light-brown heart of the violin, she evoked such beautiful phrases from unworthy melodies, the other players raised their eyes from their music to look at her. Yet most of the time she played as indifferently as the others; reading pages of music with the apathy of a school-girl reciting her lesson for the teacher. She was not beautiful, but when she allowed music to possess her, an inner light suffused the lines of her face, and strange phosphorescent colors from her eyes delineated the purity of her mouth and forehead.

The afternoons being more than comfortably warm, the guests noisily thronged the lobby of the hotel. Young men in flannels, just back from a tennis match, leaned on the arms of chairs and held joyous conversations with spirited, long-legged young ladies; while at the other end of the lobby, women of indefinite ages fluttered lace fans, imi-

tating, unconsciously and clumsily, the Cuban señoritas.

Like all good things, my vacation was soon over; and I wondered why I had not had the courage to speak to her, as other people had done.

But the boat had no sooner glided out of the colorful, sun-baked pier than I saw her, leaning on the rails, waving her arms to some one on shore. She was on the boat! Seeing her, I was overcome with a strange joy. And though we had not been introduced, we expressed our mutual surprise, and shook hands in a most friendly fashion. Before she had gone down to her cabin to dress, it was understood we were traveling companions; and that I was to reserve a table for the two of us in the diningroom.

"But why, why have you not spoken to me in the month you were in Havana?" she asked me again and again.

I could give no explanation and no excuse for my reticence.

The emotion of traveling, or of meeting me, had brought to her face the same light as when she played. It was only then that I became aware of the spring of her step and the pure and feminine lines of her body. To see her walk was like hearing her play.

I sat down on a deck chair to blow light-blue smoke from my pipe into the bluer atmosphere of a clear Cuban spring day, and to speculate as to her nationality. She was neither Cuban nor Italian. She was not French or Anglo-Saxon. Though we had, in our conversation, glided from English to French, testing one another out, I had noticed no trace of

foreign accent in either language.

Oh, the raised evebrow of the head steward when I reserved a table for two but did not know the name of my companion! The eloquence of that politely raised eyebrow! The many things the head steward knew and the many things he could tell to a man who did not know the name of the companion across his table in a boat's dining-room! I answered his eyes with a glance from my own, which was meant to convey very clearly: You are mistaken, man. Don't ever look at me that way again!

We had left Havana at four in the afternoon. Before dinner, I sat down on a deck chair beside the young lady to admire the setting of the sun beyond the shadow-enshrined dark outline of El Morro. When the red ball had disappeared behind the fire in the dark-blue horizon, the violinist turned around languorously and said:

"And you don't even know my name . . . Elvira Berton. A man came down to Havana a few weeks ago, heard me, and engaged me to play in New York. Wasn't that beautiful? I have never been there before."

I introduced myself, telling her I had already wanted to do so in Havana, but had not dared. . . .

That evening, talking to her about a thousand

nothings, there wasn't a single unchaste thought in my mind, a single unchaste desire in my being. A sense of unreality pervaded me when she left my side to dress for the dance. The voices in the ball-room melted together in a sort of unrhythmic music which enveloped and caressed me; an unrhythmic music superimposed upon the steady droning of the engine underneath my feet. She appeared, a little later, in the simplest white frock, which contrasted sharply with the black of her hair and eyes and the red rose she had pinned at her shoulder.

Because I liked to talk to her, or because of the memory of her own playing at the American Hotel, I did not ask her to dance with me. She seemed interested in the conversation and gave no hint of a desire to dance.

At the third dance, a tall blonde young man, perfectly attired, bowing politely, asked my permission to dance with my companion. Elvira responded with alacrity; and seeing them disappear in the throng of dancers, it seemed to me that these two had got far better acquainted in a few moments than we could ever hope to be in months. I resented him; resented him because he was so handsome, because he danced so well. I should never dare ask her to dance after she had danced with that blonde young heart-breaker. Oh, how I hated him!

How beautifully their heads paired together! How well her pitch-black-hair-enframed face was outlined against his golden head. His blue eyes gathered the reflection of hers. His lips curled up in response to hers. I had lost her. Had I danced with her, I could have refused him the permission to dance with my companion. But now it was too late. I had lost her. I hated him. Hated him. Hated myself. The dining-room steward would raise an eyebrow in contempt when he should pass my table and see me alone. She would desert me, certainly, and eat at his table.

These thoughts flashed through my mind during the few minutes the dance lasted. All the dancers stood still in the middle of the platform and applauded for an encore; but I only heard the handclapping of the two of them. I had been discarded. She would probably join his table and smile ironically every time she passed me by, leaning on his arm.

A half-hour later they joined me in the salon, where I was sipping a liqueur.

"We have been looking for you," she said.

We! She had said "we." She and he were "we."

"I am sorry to have deprived you of your beautiful companion," he said, bowing politely.

She looked into his eyes while he was saying this polite nothing; and then turning to me, still leaning on his arm, she said reproachfully:

"Why did you run away? Don't you dance?"

"I never dance," I replied, in my best surly manner.

She looked at me quizzically, and then said in a remote-sounding voice, as if to herself:

"It seems to me I did see you dance, in Havana."

"Illusion," I lied; for I had danced in Havana with the wife of a friend staying at the American Hotel.

"Illusion," she repeated. "I am almost certain . . ."

To give to the lie the weight of truth, I insisted: "Most certainly an illusion. I've never danced in my life." I bit my lip. These words deprived me of the pleasure of ever dancing with her. She sat down and invited the blonde young man to sit down beside her.

"I'll have to teach you."

The young man introduced himself.

"Favory," he said. "André Favory."

"Illusions," he echoed. "We don't quite know what illusions are. It is quite possible you danced and don't know. And again it is possible mademoiselle had an illusion, or is having one at this moment. We become aware of what has been illusory only when another person denies the reality of the incident we have imagined. But we have many more illusions than we know. Has it ever occurred to you that after finding something, you do find something again a few moments later, near-by the object you have just found? Perhaps nine tenths of what we call realities are nothing but illusions. Your existence here, our conversation, may only be

an illusion of mine or yours, or of the three of us separately."

"More than one tenth is real," I replied, in a superior voice. "We are as real as the throbbing of the engine I hear right now—as . . ." but I interrupted myself, for Elvira had disappeared. I had not noticed her slip away. I was too preoccupied with his personality. I hated more than I loved. I hated with greater intensity. I wanted to crush him . . . and she had disappeared.

André Favory looked at me and smiled cynically. "Women always leave when the conversation involves abstractions," he explained, and continued to talk very learnedly and abstractedly about illusions and what created them. Strangely enough, he said things I had often thought, and expressed himself in the very words I would have chosen. Still, it was as if an enemy had chosen to fight with my weapons.

While he was speaking I was trying to place him. Elvira spoke English, French, Spanish without an accent. This man spoke the three languages fluently, beautifully, yet with a faint foreign accent. He knew several literatures. He knew I was trying to place him, but having read my thoughts, he was trying to confuse me, as if he himself didn't know to what nation or race he belonged, avoiding even thinking on that subject, lest I surprise his thought. His conversation became more animated, more serious, and his voice changed with the subject. It had had a sweet quality when he had spoken lightly of

serious matters; but when the lady had gone and he had settled down to serious discussion, his voice became deep and mellow, while he was looking at the pipe in which he burned a strong, fragrant tobacco.

Quite involuntarily, I said:

"I thought you smoked only scented cigarettes."

He looked at me and said, with a gesture of his hands:

"If it annoys you . . ." and left the table, still

stuffing his pipe.

He had been immaculately dressed, in evening clothes, when he had asked Elvira to dance; but now I noticed he was wearing a tweed suit, exactly like one of mine hanging in the wardrobe of my cabin. When I saw the two of them dancing a few minutes later, he was again in evening clothes. I wondered! He could not have changed dress so quickly! Was I seeing things? Or was he trying to mystify me?

On the promenade deck I looked at the stars and tried to remember what I had once known about the constellations; the Milky Way, the Great Bear, Venus. The whole blue of the sky was sprinkled with scintillating diamonds, sprayed by an unseen hand. The indefinable odors from ashore (we were traveling within sight of land) mingled with the acrid flavor of decaying vegetation rising from the depths of the sea. The continual chattering cries of the monkeys and birds of the jungle merged with the splashing of the waves and the music of the ball-room orchestra.

My fury subsiding, I reasoned calmly. I had spoiled it all, and was ungracefully playing a losing game. These two people complemented one another! She was dark and he was blonde. Her eyes were black and his were blue. He was much younger than I was. He danced beautifully. Chance had brought them together. Certainly they belonged together.

I would have my meals brought to my cabin and let him occupy my place across from her at the table. Watching the sky and the stars, I reasoned out the better way. In the jungle, at that very moment, the strong destroyed the weak. The law of the jungle was the law of life. That blonde young man was the stronger. He had won; won at a single stroke. I should have danced with her at the first beat of the jazz drum.

Couples were passing by on the promenade deck. It was too dark to distinguish their faces, but I strained my ears to hear them. I saw them pass by. He was holding the folds of a large black cape over her shoulders to protect her against the chill of the night. Another couple passed by, but I listened to a distant laughter. Were they talking about me? Laughing at my discomfiture? I could forget her, but could not put him out of my mind.

It was daylight when I finally made a last tour of the promenade, to take the limpness out of my numbed legs. As I went down the narrow winding stairway I heard a voice wishing another one good-

night at the door of some distant cabin. And it was his voice.

Half awake and half asleep, I reproached myself for all the things I had done and not done in my life, and the faux pas I had committed, the idiotic happenings, all because of my rashness and stupidity; friendships I had lost because I refused to dissipate false impressions which I had given about myself, happiness I had lost because I had quibbled and hesitated before saying the right word. How frequently had I said the wrong word, while fully conscious of what I should say! This damned André Favory was right in what he said about illusions. The many times I had thought women beautiful because I had been in love with them! The many times I had been unjust because of a preconceived idea. Nine tenths of our existence is illusion? Why, he was hardly right. Only a fraction of one tenth is real. Had I really gone to Havana for a rest? Had I really been there? And was there such a being as Elvira on board ship? I had wanted companionship on a dream voyage. I had imagined she was playing in an orchestra at Havana, imagined her transports of passion, imagined that she happened to be on the boat on which I was traveling. All illusions. Only the continued throbbing of the engine seemed real. That, and my desire for rest which couldn't be satisfied. My whole being was working to the rhythm of the engine while I tried to rest.

I was awakened by a knock at the door.

"Gentleman not feeling well? There's a lady who wants to see you." The cabin boy spoke.

I pulled the covers up to my neck.

"Not feeling well?" I heard Elvira's voice before I saw her face.

"I'm all right; but what time is it?" I questioned crossly.

"Why, it must be about three in the afternoon. It was not nice of you to let me eat alone."

"Alone?" I echoed, whimsically and half reproachfully. "Come. Come."

"Alone, alone," she answered, coming nearer, and pulling aside the curtain from the porthole.

I only half believed what she said, or didn't believe it at all; but let it go at that. She looked at me and said:

"But you are not feeling well. You needn't be ashamed to feel seasick. Men are such funny animals—ashamed to be defeated even by the sea. Windmill fighters; that's what you are."

"Is he sick?" I questioned.

"He? Who? Oh, Mr. Favory. I don't know," she said; and again I didn't believe her. Of course she knew. She had probably gone around and questioned at his cabin before coming to mine. I was only a second fiddle.

"I think it would be better for me to stay in bed

to-day."

"Then you really are not well," she said. "Well, I shall have to eat alone again."

She said this with such feeling that I was moved to assure her I should certainly be well enough to dine with her. She put her hand out, and did not withdraw her soft satin fingers when I held them just a trifle longer to thank her without words for the pleasure she gave me, asking me to do her a favor. She patted me on the cheek.

"You mustn't be sick. Remember what our friend said. It's all an illusion!" And she was gone.

But "Remember what our friend said. It's all an illusion!" remained engraved in indelible letters to dance before my eyes.

I found the two sitting in the salon just before the dining hour. He vanished as I approached them.

"It's nice of you to have come," she said. "I was lonely."

"But where is Monsieur Favory?" I questioned. "I don't know. I haven't seen him," she answered.

The lie wrecked the charm of her company that evening. Why must she deny him? How near were they to one another that she should dispose of him and his existence in such a nonchalant way? Did she think me blind? Or were the two in league to exasperate me? Denying his existence, she affirmed it the stronger. They did not want to be seen together. It was my business, therefore, not to see them.

He came again to ask her to dance with him, greeting me familiarly, and with an air of triumph. The mock deference was insulting; as if he wanted

to emphasize my age, and make me appear at least

ten years older than I really was.

"Oh, Monsieur Favory," she was saying, "were you ill to-day?" And as he led her with an exaggerated gesture of gallantry to the ball-room, I could hear him say:

"I have been working . . ."

But I was convinced that when they thought themselves out of hearing, she asked:

"Do you think he saw me sitting with you?"

And he answered:

"Oh, stickers, no! Besides, it may only be an illusion!" and he laughed knowingly in her face.

He could no longer escape me. I had identified myself with him and knew his thoughts. His mind was an open book for me. My mind had grasped the antennæ of his, and do what he may, or go where he may, I should always know where he was and what he was thinking, though I should not be able to prevent it. He was a marionette whose strings pulled my fingers instead of being pulled by them.

She used a peculiar kind of perfume, probably a mixture of three or four, the scent of which was much stronger when she was away than when she was near you. It contained too much of attar of roses. I could see her, hear her, and feel her while she was dancing out on the platform. I had known her to use that perfume while she was playing in the lobby of the American Hotel. I remembered now that I had turned around on the gang-plank

when I had gone up on the boat, and had smiled at myself when I hadn't seen her, smiled because I attributed this scene more to my memory than to her presence. Now this perfume mixed with the odor of tobacco, the heavy pipe tobacco Favory had been smoking the evening before. Attar of roses and Macedonian tobacco. Why did women do that? Why did they insist on leaving shadows of their presence when they went away? That was why women used perfumes so extensively: to keep men's minds and senses while they were elsewhere. Invisible chains!

"Won't you please let me teach you to dance?" I heard her voice murmur, as she put a hand familiarly on my shoulder. "I don't know anything more beautiful than dancing. Really, I am convinced I have seen you dance."

I rose to my feet in order to have her sit opposite me; her perfumed shadow outlined the back of a throne.

"You know," she said, after a few sips from her liqueur glass, "I think you'd consider your trip more profitable if you learned to dance on this boat. It's so easy. And I should love to dance with you."

I smiled. But I noticed suddenly that her companion was gone. Why did he slip away so silently? Involuntarily, I touched my pockets to see whether my watch was still there.

"And Monsieur Favory, doesn't he dance beautifully?" she asked. "Since you don't want to dance,

I wish he'd ask me to dance with him." Her words implied she hadn't yet danced with him.

"But you have danced with him to-night, haven't

you?" I asked.

Before she answered my question he appeared, bowed, offered his arm, and the two melted into the throng, moving to the strains of a soft and languorous tango that brought their bodies so close together knee against knee, their four legs described a pattern as definite and intricate as if they belonged to only one body and were moved by a single inner rhythm. He appeared whenever she wished him to come. She could command. I only knew. She loved. I hated.

I sat down for a short rest on the promenade deck, and went down to my cabin long before the strange, newly boat-acquainted couples had come out for air between dances.

He was in my cabin. He was facing the little mirror over the wash-stand, and patting his hair with one hand while he shook the ashes from a cigarette with the other. I looked at him sternly. He turned around and, smiling very affably, said:

"Why not sit down for a minute and talk it

over?"

"What is there to talk over? I am tired. Good-

night."

Disregarding his existence, though I knew he was still in my cabin, I undressed. He watched me. From time to time he said something inconsequen-

tial, while I grew more and more excited, repressed by his personality and by my efforts to control myself.

"What I want to say," he began, "is . . ."

I looked at him. My gaze contained all that I expected to hear from him, and all the answer. His stature seemed to grow smaller and smaller as I looked at him. When I brought myself to speak to him he had disappeared from the cabin.

I called the cabin boy and scolded him for allowing somebody access to my cabin without my permission. The boy assured me he hadn't seen any-

body go in, and promised to obey orders.

The imp, the numskull, the insolent pup! What did he mean by sneaking into my cabin? What had he to talk over with me? I neither owned Elvira nor had any pretensions to her. She was a total stranger. I knew what he wanted to tell me: that I was too old, although I still looked young. As if life could be measured by the years one has already lived! The years ahead are the measure, and their numbers no one knows. But how on earth had he come in and gone out without being seen? One could never rely on cabin boys. You slip them a coin and you are invisible; they have neither seen nor heard you.

I fell asleep thinking of him. He appeared and disappeared when I raised or lowered my eyebrows.

It must have been about midnight when I heard his voice again close by my bed in the dark cabin. "What you call illusion and what you call reality," he said, "is entirely within you, and has nothing to do with real life. That is what I came to explain to you."

He had come to mock and exasperate me. I was out of bed and pummeling him and tearing at him with little regard for the Queensberry rules of fight-

ing . . .

I don't know how long that lasted, for the cabin boy and a number of passengers came running, in their night-clothes, to my door. I shook the boy violently.

"Didn't I tell you," I screamed, "not to allow

anybody in my cabin?"

The boy volubly explained he had seen nobody, although he had been sitting in the passageway. The cabin was in a terrific state. He was gone; had slipped out in the dark and the confusion. My knuckles were bleeding; there were scratches on my face. I put on my clothes hastily and went to his cabin, determined to stop this insolence. I heard people laugh and say: "Too much drink. Cherchez la femme."

His cabin was wide open. He was not there. I was much too upset to go back to my cabin. I washed my hands and face, stanched the blood on my knuckles, and went back to the salon for a much-needed cordial.

I hadn't been there more than a few minutes when the lights went low, and the head waiter sang out: "Bar closes in ten minutes." At that moment Elvira came in, skipping beside Favory, followed by other couples in hilarious moods. He begged the waiter to serve them one last round of drinks; for they were frozen. Seeing me, Elvira said:

"Where were you? We were all on the upper deck and had a fine time. An old Italian traveling third class plays the accordion wonderfully. We got him up with us and he played Italian songs."

"And have you been with them all the time?"

I asked Favory.

"Had the ladies not suddenly felt cold, I would still be there, for the sound of an accordion awakens in me strange sensations and memories," he replied, a little too emotionally. The scoundrel!

"But you play the accordion so well yourself," one of the ladies admiringly exclaimed. "I should say you play it as well as the other fellow."

"And you did not go down even for a little

while?" I questioned.

"I would not let him go," Elvira answered in his stead. "I held on to his arm all the time. It was so cold."

The conversation rambled on about the different merits of musical instruments. He talked very learnedly and cleverly, and expressed himself as clearly as if this very conversation had already taken place elsewhere. His thoughts flowed freely, and he expressed himself so precisely it seemed impossible he could both think and phrase at the same

time. And all the while I thought: How had he slipped out unobserved from among them to come down twice to my cabin? How had he managed to appear so neat and composed again after five minutes of scuffling in my cabin? He wore his evening clothes. They had not been rumpled. It seemed to me that he was a little paler than usual. He was able to direct the conversation at will, starting from one point and radiating in a hundred different directions. The eyes of Elvira and the other women clung to his lips. As I arose to go, he said:

"If you weren't so antagonistic to me, we could

have some very interesting discussions."

"Don't come to my cabin when you want to have interesting discussions."

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean," he answered.

"Just what I said."

"What is the matter with you?" Elvira pleaded with me.

"Good-night, all."

Before going to bed I shoved my Browning under the pillow.

As I wasn't very well, I kept mostly to my cabin. Elvira came in to see me a few times during the next few days; but as I gave her no encouragement, when we reached Baltimore I hadn't seen her in two days. There I decided to leave the boat and continue with the train to New York.

I hadn't been in the train five minutes when I saw Elvira, Favory, and a number of other people boarding the next car. We smiled sheepishly, for we had both tried to avoid one another, sneaking away without saying good-by. It was the definite breaking of our disappointing friendship.

During the few hours of travel I tried vainly to put him out of my mind. It was easy to forget her, but I could not dismiss him so easily. I spent more energy hating the obstacle than reaching the goal. I was getting old. Youth overcomes obstacles by ignoring them. Middle-age begins to notice every

pebble on the road.

When the train stopped in the New York station I saw him call a porter from the window and help her get her luggage out. While the porter was waiting for directions, loaded with her satchels and things, Favory and Elvira quarreled. He was smiling triumphantly into her face. She was stamping her feet in anger. When he had gone away, bowing before her, she ran after him, turned him around, and asked: "When, where?" I could hear her question distinctly, but not his answer. And so I grinned to myself. A secret rendezvous. She had run after him, begging: "When, where?"

Just because her face had been illuminated when she played beautiful passages of a melody, I had credited her with greater purity than she possessed. But he knew. When he had come to my cabin it was probably to tell me what a fool I was. He had come in a purely chivalrous way, as between men, to ask whether I was interested in the lady. He may even have come to warn me against her. However, the thing had come to an end. I should probably never meet them again.

What a strange city New York is! People from the four corners of the earth. In another city, when you meet some one you don't expect to meet, you wonder and ask: "What has brought you here?" But one never wonders why some one has come to New York; New York, a lake in a valley perpetually fed by melting human snows and gushing mountain springs.

I saw both Elvira and Favory, singly and together, passing by on the street while I was in a car, or passing in a car before my eyes while I was walking leisurely down the street. Yet I never met them face to face, never met either of them anywhere to talk to. I was certain they lived somewhere in my neighborhood, singly, or together. And they probably talked about me occasionally, nay, frequently. I could almost hear what he said. His shadow was always somewhere when my room was dark. I could not put him out of my mind. My love for Elvira had been a passing fancy, but my hate for him seemed to be eternal. It was even a little impersonal. Middle-age against youth . . . youth that makes us conscious that our own youth is behind us . . .

When I was dining lately with Bill Harmon and his wife, Margaret said:

"Did you know, Bill, Elvira has come back from

Brazil?"

The mere mention of the name startled me. Involuntarily, I asked:

"Has she come back?"

"Why, do you know Elvira?" Margaret asked. I laughed as I answered:

"No, I was probably thinking of an entirely different Elvira. Strange that the mere mention of a name should startle me so!"

"And give you away," the lady of the house ended. "Tell us who your friend is. You were in love with her! You still are! I know. Don't deny it. Don't lie. Oh, so you have secrets!"

"I traveled once from Havana with a young lady of that name. I met her on the boat." And then, without looking up, I half told them what happened on the boat. My friends were a little taken back. It was the same Elvira; and I had given information which the young lady had not been anxious to impart to her friends. And now when I said I was certain it was not the same Elvira, Margaret said:

"There are some things that sound like her, and other things are so far away, I don't see how it could be Elvira you were talking about."

And then, to make them forget what I had said, I launched upon a thousand different topics, one

more entertaining and more absorbing than the other, to confuse them, to smother what I had said under what I was saying. I had a guilty conscience. I should have asked them to forgive me for reflections on a woman I hardly knew, or knew but little, but I relied too much on my ability to make them forget.

What didn't I do to make them forget! I told real and imaginary tales of travel, described real and imaginary customs of peoples, sang songs and played the piano, mimicked this one and that one, and even exhibited curious and intricate dance steps; conscious that I was not succeeding; that even while they listened to me and watched me, they were thinking of the dark light I had shed on their friend.

The following day I was called on the telephone, and I knew before I had put the receiver to my ear who was calling me. She was downstairs, in the lobby. I asked her to come up, and half expected to see Favory with her when I opened the door. She greeted me very affably, wearing the same smile she had when she asked me: "Isn't there something I can do for you?" She was still very beautiful, though a few years had elapsed since I had last seen her. She lit a cigarette.

"It's very nice to hear of you again, but why did you invent a man constantly in my company? And that fight in your cabin! I danced with a young man on board boat once or maybe twice. I dimly

remember that you were rude to a person one evening when we had just come into the bar, after listening to an Italian play the accordion. But the rest of the trip I was in your company. We lunched together and dined together, when you were not in your cabin. And by the way, you treated me most shabbily. Left off without saying good-by at Baltimore. And I had so hoped . . . well, that's that."

"But you were with him on the train from Baltimore to New York!"

"I? As a matter of fact, I went on with the boat to New York, and was met on the pier by Bill Harmon, the 'New York cousin,' as I call him."

She was wonderful! Truth was no obstacle. What she denied ceased to exist. I couldn't help smiling inwardly at her denial of what I knew to be absolutely true. Instead of telling me not to mention what had happened on board boat, she merely rejected the whole incident. Conventional language had reached enormous heights. How clearly one could express one's desires by saying something else. Of course, it was my duty to comply.

"Excuse a romancer . . ."

She wasn't angry with me. I was a gentleman. I believed her words and not my eyes. So she went on talking about other things.

"I've married since, you know. I wish you'd come up to see us sometimes. I've frequently spoken about you to my husband. He's anxious to meet you." At once the reason for her denial became evident to me. I had carelessly raked up a past.

"And the husband is blonde and blue-eyed?" I

questioned, smilingly.

"Of course, you are certain I would not have mar-

ried a dark-eyed one!" she parried.

Long after she had gone I sat in front of the fireplace, musing and reënacting in my imagination what had happened on board boat, and what Elvira wanted me to believe had happened. I remembered the words Favory had said while standing over me in the cabin, about illusions and reality. And she deliberately wanted to create an illusion, to give me an illusion of an illusion. To see her had awakened all my memories of him; the consciousness of his existence. She was still very beautiful. I wondered again what her husband was like-probably blonde, blue-eyed, suave, tall, slender, with a very deep voice and deliberate movements. She probably had a child now! Bah, Favory was her husband. My mind refused to admit the possibility of another man being her husband. This unshakable fiend was the father of her child. Her perfume recalled him to my memory and not her. I hated attar of roses. The scent pinched my nostrils. Women should change their perfume after marrying.

At that moment the telephone bell rang, and I

knew who was at the phone.

"You mustn't say all these things about me," his voice came clear over the wire. "You and I had

some conversation about illusions and reality. Why talk about me in such a disparaging manner? Why invent such a horrible tale—that I intruded in your cabin and you had a fist-fight with me?"

I hung up. Her perfume filled the room. His exasperating voice rasped in my ears. I called the telephone operator in the lobby and told her that I didn't want to be disturbed. I was not to be called any more that evening.

"But nobody has called you," the operator said.

"A minute ago some one phoned and talked to me," I objected.

"No, sir," she answered; "nobody has phoned you."

"Only a minute ago I was called and I talked to a man I knew."

And then I telephoned Elvira.

"Elvira," I pleaded, "you shouldn't have given him my phone number!"

The tone of her voice denying she had done anything of the sort, or that she even knew of his existence, was so sincere and convincing I was even more puzzled.

And suddenly I knew what I desired more than anything else.

"May I come up when your husband is home?" I begged.

"Come over now. He has just come in. We shall be delighted . . ."

He was dark-eyed. His hair was almost as black

HAVANA

as hers. He was not at all like Favory. Why, her husband looked a little like me . . .

For the first time in years I was free! The first sound of her husband's voice freed me of the persecuting image. And I no longer cared whether Favory existed or not . . .

Since then, I have never seen him anywhere, even for a fleeting glimpse.



CONSTANTINOPLE ALLAH IL ALLAH



CONSTANTINOPLE ASPIRES TO ALLAH

CONSTANTINOPLE

ALLAH IL ALLAH

The boat by which I had left Piræus, the Acropolis, the Theseum, and the temple of Bacchus glided into the bay of Stamboul . . . city of Califs, queen city of the Orient, whose silver-slippered, golden feet bathe in the vermilion waters of the phosphorescent Bosporus. Our boat was followed by a scattering of high-prowed caiques, rowed by powerful, bare, brown, muscled arms of red-turbaned, blue-trousered Turks.

On the blue-veined granite cliffs the palaces of the sultan, sprawling white stone walls, with gold-framed doors and window sashes, dominate the pointed cupolas of the domes and minarets of the city, which looks like a forest of spears against the indigo-blue of the sky. From the shore, lined deep with idle craft, men and women walked out toward our steamer by stepping from one rowboat to another. Their voices mingled harmoniously with the soft and lazy splashing of the water.

From the mosques the muezzins were calling to prayer. All activity ceased. Backs curved. Heads

touched the bottoms of the boats. Not an oar moved. Not another voice was heard. The deafening rumble of the great city was cut off abruptly.

"Allah il Allah Mahomet Rassoul Allah," the nasal tones echoed, quivering from Stamboul to Pera and from there to the bay. . . . "God is the only God and Mahomet is His prophet."

We were in Constantinople, the holy city, whence Allah rules the whole Mohammedan world.

One is always in the shadow of a mosque in Constantinople; and the meditation of my *hamal*, the porter who carried my baggage, was just as vague and as profound as the meditation of the theological student from the *Ahzar*, the Mohammedan university, who met me at the door of the hotel.

The last word of the prayers merged, in a sort of legato, with the offer of watermelons to passengers. Interrupted haggling was taken up from where it had been left off. The lid which had closed upon the noises of the city was raised again. The air vibrated with shrieks, the grinding of steel on steel, chanting, quarrels in a babel of tongues.

No other shore in the world is as active as the bay of Constantinople. The Turks, lazy and indolent, never practise economy of motion, preferring to raise their arms twenty times to do nothing than to raise them once to accomplish something. Their gestures are as involuntary as their savagery, their kindness, their devotion, and their godlessness.

While washing up in my room I heard the cry of

"Vaugun Var." Fire! The men sitting on the terraces of the coffee-houses trooped leisurely to the street, carrying their cups and their narghiles with them as they pressed forward, savoring the coffee and inhaling deeply the cold, perfumed smoke of the tawny tobacco, as they watched the fire on the Dolma Bagtche, the European shore. What cared they? Their homes were not burning—yet, were out of danger on the Beylerbey, the Asiatic shore.

I ran to where the fire was burning. There were two kinds of people at that moment—those whose houses were in flames and those who looked on, shaking their heads to the victims' cry of "Aman, Aman."

Ah, the miserable belongings scattered on the street. The scared children, holding on to the skirts of their heavily veiled mothers, mounting guard over the few pots and the troughs of dough, which they defended against the hundreds of stray, scabby dogs.

The dogs of Constantinople! Hundreds of thousands. They own and rule the Turkish capital. Considered so unclean no Mohammedan is allowed to touch them, they are the scourge of Constantinople; they know the cry of *Vaugun Var* and where to find the food the victims have carried along in their flight.

A few hundred feet off, a dozen wooden shacks were burning. Huddled together in the open square, men, women, and children were sitting on the

ground, rocking backward and forward, moaning one single word, the untranslatable Aman, Aman. The dogs were fighting among themselves. They circled around themselves wildly, trying to rid themselves of the rubberlike dough they had tried to eat and which enraged rather than fed them. The leader of the pack, a huge old dog, snarled loudly; and as quickly as they had come they disappeared, to forage elsewhere. It was the "meat hour"—the hour at which the butchers carve their meat behind closed doors, in fear of the dogs. The dogs know the hour. Bones would be thrown to them to stave them off.

Meanwhile, the fire had burned itself out; when it had subsided, a few hand-pumps were brought up with much ado. A detachment of soldiers ran ahead of the formidable apparatuses, clearing the street with their long sticks and crying: "Bestour, bestour!" (Get out of the way.)

Those whose homes had been burned returned from the open square to warm themselves at the embers. A handsome young Turk, the father of four children, took out from a bundle of things a brass coffee-mill, which he handed to his wife to turn. One of the children fetched water from the hose-pipe of the firemen, while the father collected live embers which he fanned to a slow fire. Soon there were a dozen small fires. The firemen were offered little cups of coffee. The veiled women lit their cigarettes, the men their narghiles, and they all began to chant; for it was the first of the forty Rama-

dan nights; nights of gaiety and dancing; of song and feasting. Homelessness did not disturb the "faithful." True, the dogs had eaten or polluted the food prepared for the eve of the days of fasting, but Allah was Allah, and Mahomet was his prophet. They had saved their coffee-mills, the coffee-pots, the narghiles—Allah be praised! One always had more than one needed. "You learn to know how little is necessary to maintain life only after the loss of wealth and property. Allah be praised!"

Ordinarily, Stamboul is very quiet after nightfall. Only from Pera, from the European quarters, rise muffled sounds and bits of music from cafés and hotels, where lightly clad women and uniformed men dance from sundown to sunrise. But that night was the first night of Ramadan. The wild gaiety of the Mohammedans surpassed the noise from Galata. Their quarters were brightly lit by paper lanterns strung from house to house across the streets. A thousand fifes cried out as many unaccompanied melodies. The squares and street corners were jammed with men and children, singing and dancing, separately or in couples, heedless of measure and rhythm. The older folk sat on the curbs, smoking, and drinking coffee brewed upon embers bought for a penny from ambulant "fire venders."

And they all eat and eat and eat. During the Ramadan it is forbidden to taste food in the day, but favor is gained for him who eats the whole

night; from eve till dawn. And so men dance and eat. But not a woman is to be seen anywhere.

"Bestour, bestour!" Two huge eunuchs holding lanterns in one hand, staffs in the other, marched ahead of sixty heavily veiled women, five to a row, the harem of some pasha, viewing the Ramadan festivities. The women were enveloped in loose hanging brown woolen coats, reaching to the ankles above the bare sandaled feet. Two eunuchs closed the procession. The group resembled a herd of tall brown sheep, shuffling on slippered feet.

A few minutes later another herd of brown-clad women passed by. The crowd knew to whom the harem belonged, judging by the insolence of his servants, who brought sticks down torcefully upon the backs of onlookers who stepped aside too slowly.

"Bestour, bestour!" "Hast thou not heard me? Grandson of a pig, on thy father's side, and of a camel on thy mother's! Bestour, bestour!"

"You can trust me, stranger. I am the *chiaoush* of a *Giami*, in Scutari. I shall ride beside you. It is a kind and clever horse. It knows its way home, through crowds; as trustworthy as I am, effendi."

To Scutari then, to see how the Ramadan was celebrated there. A friend had recommended Mustapha, who owned two saddle-horses. He was riding à few paces ahead of me, clearing the way with his whip. No one protested.

We passed several harems out for a stroll. One

of them, consisting of nearly two hundred women, was surrounded by forty Ethiopian eunuchs, bare to the waist. Their black bodies glistened under the light of the lanterns which they carried upon sticks.

"It is the harem of Vizir Ibrahim," Mustapha informed me. "The women wear yellow and green

cloaks."

The harems of the great, like racing stables, sport their own colors.

As we passed through the "Mahalas," the outlying districts of Stamboul, the gaiety ebbed and diminished, until the streets became pitch-dark. Dogs, sprawling in the roads, snarled and barked at us. The horses picked their way carefully over the cobblestones and the indescribable filth which littered the way. Mustapha was chanting his prayers.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, we were upon the white marble quay of Scutari. The sea, as still and quiet as a painted fleecy rug, was before us. The white marble quay, the sea, the deep-blue, silver-sprinkled sky, robbed me of all sense of reality.

"Look, effendi," Mustapha cried out.

A hundred feet away two naked dervishes were dancing, running, heads low against each other, and spinning about themselves. Through the still air the acrid smell of their bodies reached my nostrils. Knee touching knee, the dervishes held hands and began to revolve slowly. After about a dozen turns, they began to sing and turn faster and faster. Their spines curved outward until their heads touched.

And they spun and spun, a circle of flesh upon a moving socket spinning in blue space.

"Now, let's go," Mustapha said. "One can never know what a dervish will do when he awakens."

"Awakens?" I queried.

"Don't you know? They are asleep now. That

is how a dervish sleeps."

The smells of the "Mahalas" and the dancing of the two men made me feel like after a night of heavy drinking.

"I am afraid of falling off my horse," I cried out.

"Aman, Aman!"

He helped me to alight, and soon produced the all-powerful, all-curative Turkish remedy—a strong cup of coffee.

"Drink, effendi. Pray to your God, for He too is a prophet. Not as great a prophet as Mahomet,

but still a prophet."

While recovering from a spell of faintness, I half listened to Mustapha's learned dissertation upon the

merits of our respective religions.

We rode on farther and away from the white quay. The streets became animated again. The dancing, though more energetic than in other districts, was more ordered, more rhythmic. There were fewer fifes playing. The dancers were of a sturdier type and cleaner. On the square stood small booths, lit by colored paper lanterns. White-aproned venders sold rahat, dates, nuts, and flat round breads. The red fezzes upon the heads of the men were held tightly

in place by white turbans. The children were more orderly; there were fewer dogs, and they seemed quieter and better nourished. We were in Scutari. The people of Scutari, though so near to Stamboul, never mingle with the others. The dancers were farmers from the vicinity. A rug was spread under the feet of a light-footed bayadere. The dancer's toes were covered with rings, set with yellow, green, and blue stones. Her arms jingled with silver bangles reaching to her elbows. The onlookers clapped their hands.

"Yaha, yaha; Yamash, yamash; Ana, ana; Allah, Allah . . ." the women sang, their voices muffled by the veils on their faces.

The dancer's ankles were so delicate, her toes so beautiful, her arms so round, and her movements so youthful, I hoped to have a glimpse of her face.

Suddenly daylight began to filter through the air, a floating, opalescent haze. The dancing ceased abruptly. The booth-keepers blew the candles. Shuffling feet. Smothered laughter. The jingling of bracelets upon swinging arms. The Ramadan night was over.

The mist rose and unveiled the gray golden mass of the towers of the Valideh mosque, its minarets as transparent as Arabian lace.

The muezzin called to morning prayer. Constantinople was awake. Shops open. Doors clatter. Hammers clang.

A blacksmith, whose anvil stood in the middle of

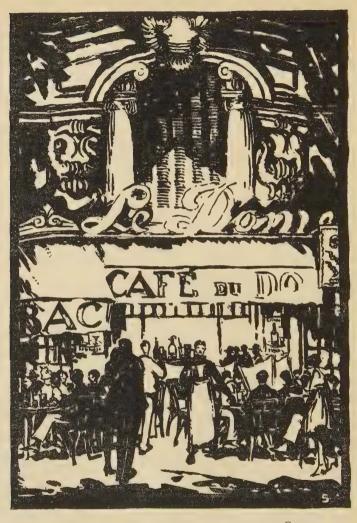
NIGHTS ABROAD

the road, stopped us, to prove to Mustapha the horses needed shoeing.

"And they need shoeing: firstly, because the irons have been shed. Secondly, because I am the best blacksmith in Turkeydom. Thirdly, because I have four children to feed. And lastly, because I can brew the best coffee."

Mustapha assured him he will never have his horses shod elsewhere . . . but not to-day. "Agale, agale . . ." Soon, soon.

PARIS BON SOIR, MONSIEUR



AMERICAN ESTHETES—STYLE 1928

PARIS

BON SOIR, MONSIEUR

THERE are two distinct Parises—the Paris of the Parisian and the Paris of the strangers.

After ten o'clock at night the heavy doors of the houses are closed. They look like fortresses. The tired soldiers have gone to sleep after a long battle. The working hours of the Parisian are long, and the pay he receives leaves him little for amusement: except for Saturday night when he mingles with those who have come for a holiday. Then he is gayer than all. Happier than all. Freer than all. You can distinguish his intelligent face in front of the cafés in the faubourgs and side streets. One is finishing his bottle of wine over a long dinner in the company of his wife and children. Another is sitting with his arm about his bien aimée and kissing her mouth between two sips of chartreuse. Another is walking with his arms about his girl, skipping, gaily laughing, singing, embracing, heedless of the next hour and everything about him. Ah! Those Parisians, born of gaiety, for gaiety; fathers and children of laughter and wit and song.

What a difference between the gaiety of the Parisians and the stranger's forced gaiety in the cafés along the boulevards at the Ermitage and the noisy Moulin Rouge, in the tinsel cabarets of Montmartre and Place Pigalle. But come up to Montparnasse in the Latin quarter where the French once lived. To-day it is inhabited by expatriated Americans who revel in what they think a newly found liberty, who drown their souls and their bodies in the wine which was meant for joy and gaiety and which they drink rapidly, in gulps, as one swallows disagreeable medicines.

Go up to the Rotonde. Wild-haired, with bloodshot eyes, with vacant stares, unkempt, unshaven, with muddy complexions, they sit around tables and drink precious liqueurs one after another, and the waiters will tell you that French wines, like French women, are wasted on those people.

And the women, wilder-eyed than the men. flabby-faced and with raucous voices, divorcées living on alimony, young women from the Middle West, come to Paris to study art and see life, waving their arms in the air like windmills, shouting, screeching, cursing, and singing snatches of the latest naughty French song they have heard on the street.

At adjoining tables, sad, heavy, moody Scandinavians sipping black coffee slowly, thoughtfully. Hamlets in corduroy, inarticulate, grotesque, and out of sympathy with their surroundings. Next to them Russians, always discussing, fiery-eyed, eager, passionate, settling the affairs of the world—literature, art, and philosophy—between them; as if they were a private affair. The air is thick with smoke and heavy with the drunken breath of a hundred open mouths.

In a corner, like panthers watching for false movements of their prev, flexible, black-haired, black-eved, smooth, oily South Americans watch with their piercing eyes the moment to wedge in between. They are so understanding of human weaknesses, so understanding of the lonesomenesses of woman. They wait for the moment when one of the women, afraid of the night, afraid to be alone, all alone in her studio, in her room somewhere. afraid of Paris she has come to conquer, long before she has conquered herself, will sigh the sigh of fear. Standing at the bar a few late Parisians watch the crowd and shake their heads. They don't understand these Americans. And whoever comes to the Rotonde or to the Select and is there after midnight is an American.

And now a group of Americans rise. Some one has passed the word that at this or that place there is a band of negroes playing jazz perfectly. There are places near-by where French orchestras play dance music, but these expatriated people who will tell you that they have left America because there is "nothing in it" rise and go where the tom-tom-tom of the orchestra is heard and where they can

sing in chorus the jazz tune based on "Home, Sweet Home."

Go down Boulevard Raspail, a long street of dormant houses where everybody is asleep. Go down the Boulevard St. Germain until you reach St. Michel. There you hear again voices and noise. You will forget you are in Paris. The outside tables of the cafés are again occupied by young Americans who have the most marvelous command of bad French, and who have succeeded in corrupting their English until it sounds like a foreign language.

From the adjoining cabarets and dance halls you will hear the wails of negro music; a weeping saxophone, a crying violin, and modern modulations on the piano of "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby Now." Perhaps you will then understand the complaints of the Parisians that Paris has become an American city; an American and Russian city, for the song of the Volga Boatman breaks into the savage jazz tunes. And in the newer cabarets they have two orchestras—a balalaika and a negro orchestra.

It was midnight. Passing over the Pont Neuf a shabby-looking individual was trying the old trick of making believe he was ready to jump into the water unless I came to the rescue.

"Isn't it rather embarrassing," I asked, "not to jump into the water when a man doesn't come to your rescue?"

The rascal raised his shoulders: "No more embar-

rassing than to offer to sell some one shoe laces and be refused. Pardon, monsieur, I see some one coming."

A foreign-looking man and a woman had just walked out upon the moonlit bridge. I was sure he caught them with his trick. I heard the woman crying, I heard the rascal's shrill voice. He was begging them to let him die. They were taking him with them. In the morning they will find themselves robbed.

While sitting in front of Café de la Paix, Martha, the one-legged street-walker, whose wooden leg can be heard from around the block, whose eyes are so big the rest of the face doesn't exist, pale, consumptive—the paleness accentuated by fards and powders—Martha came to sit by me.

It is now ten years since I had first seen her. She has not changed a bit. How the kind of life she leads has not killed the frail body of the cripple is past my understanding! It was raining, and so I told her:

"Wouldn't it have been better for you, Martha, to stay at home on a night like this?"

She shrugged her shoulders in that eloquent Parisian manner and said: "Ah, monsieur, because I am so frail and you are so strong, I will bury you yet."

Martha resented my remarks about her health. She walked off without finishing the glass of chartreuse I had offered her. She will never speak to me again. She will never sit by me again.

A monocled, tall man in English clothes passed up and down the boulevard in front of me several times with just a hint of a wink in his eye. I looked at him. He bowed himself politely to a table adjoining mine. I noticed no waiter came up to ask him what he desired to drink. He took his monocle off and wiping it carefully with a silk handkerchief he asked, first in bad English and then in worse French, whether I was a newcomer to Paris. By the time he had readjusted his monocle the high cheek bones and the cut of his mouth told me that he was a Russian. A Caucasian no doubt. What a cruel mouth! What dangerous eyes! And hands . . . horrible hands with long nervous fingers of knotty knuckles.

"This is a wonderful city, monsieur," he continued. "A very wonderful city," and his chair moved still nearer mine. "I should like to show you something of this wonderful Paris, for instance," and he pulled out from his pocket a package of obscene photographs, "genuine photographs. Actual photographs. The lady is a princess."

I raised my hand. I was not interested. "And it is only one hundred francs."

And when I had refused to buy the photographs, he offered cocaine, morphine, and finally himself as guide to different "interesting" places which he knew. A little later, growing more confidential and while removing himself to go to another table where two noisy Spaniards had sat down, he said:

"Ah, monsieur, business is getting more and more difficult. The world has degenerated. Men are no longer interested in what they used to be interested in. Had I had such photographs ten years ago, eh, eh! We employ people with imagination for the composition of these photographs. Artists, monsieur. The most beautiful women. Artists of love, monsieur. Yet nobody seems to be interested. Ah, monsieur, the world has degenerated."

At the Place Pigalle is a cabaret fifteen steps down below the sidewalk. You pass through three different doors to get in. You are looked up and down before you are permitted to pass from one door to the other. You are scrutinized and investigated. Two men in frock coats come out to look at you. Their gestures asking for a bribe to allow you within

are only too plain.

When you have finally passed the third door you enter into a semi-dark room lit by small lamps. There are rough pine tables, rough pine benches. The glasses and decanters are chained to the tables. Very evil-looking apaches with their caps over their eyes and red handkerchiefs swatted negligently over black shirts sit in corners. A few greasy fat déclassée women, with legs thrown one over another so high the knees are bare, turn half around from their company to wink at the guests.

On a little platform a red-headed girl is singing an obscene song and shedding her clothes as she sings. And then she stops singing her song. She is going to sing further if the guests will throw coins upon the platform. The apaches start throwing five-franc pieces. Their women get up and go from table to table and urge every one to throw money on the platform; because the lady will not sing the song unless they do. And when one of them refuses, an apache begins to get fresh. He hunches himself together and asks loudly why the foreign dogs should expect him to pay the money for their amusement. Then the reluctant ones throw their money also.

When there are sufficient blue-green bills on the platform the lady sheds some more of her clothes. And when she has shed all, one wishes she had not shed any. The audience is ushered out. The performance is at an end.

"Bon soir, monsieur, madame, bon soir."

You have been robbed, fooled. No one goes there twice.

Just as I was walking out the monocled gentleman was accompanying the two Spaniards he had spotted in the Café de la Paix. He bowed politely and called me "Mon ami."

It is past three o'clock in the morning. Along the Boulevard Clichy drunken revelers, accompanied by noisy women, hats cocked on one side, grease-paint running over their faces, sagging knees still trying to dance and walk sprightily, go this way and that in all directions. Taxis pass slowly, temptingly, by them. The drivers lean out to offer their services for

those who want to finish the night; there are still places which they know.

One by one the electric lights in front of the cabarets and dance halls die out. Doors and gates rattle as they are closed. You can hear the heavy keys turning in the rusty locks. The tom-tom noise of jazz diminishes in intensity. The street becomes slowly deserted and quiet, save for the roaring of the lions in the cages of the menageries along the street.

Early circus men are beginning to pack the tents and unscrew the wooden red painted horses and naughty white painted pigs. The mechanic is repairing the steam organ and lets out a few shrieks, throaty, metallic, like the last rattle in a dying man's throat. A few of the adjoining wine houses open their doors for the early-to-work people. Within the hallways white-aproned, fresh-complexioned women begin to wash their tables for the chocolates and onion soups they are to serve to the passing workmen at five cents the breakfast. The odor of melted cheese and boiled onions rises in the air. My hunger is sharpened by the foretaste of the warmth down the cold throat on a chilly morning.

Drinking the soup at the light of a spluttering acetylene lamp I heard an unceasing rumbling of high two-wheeled trucks and the heavy slow throb of horses, as if the artillery of an army were marching over cobblestones. Calls and greetings, snatches of songs, braying of donkeys and neighing of horses.

The rumbling came nearer and nearer: the market trucks going to the Halle, from the farms and truck gardens belting forty miles around Paris.

Carts and carts filled brimful with green cabbages, driven by heavy, overclothed, mustached peasants, while wives lie asleep on top of the greens. Another cart heavy with lettuce and carrots. The green and red of the vegetables sharpened by the grayness in the air under a silver moon make one lose the sense of reality. Were it not for the woman driving a cart and singing loudly a song to herself, while two youngsters dangled their feet from the side of the wagon, munching heavy slices of bread, the cavalcade would have seemed ghostlike—a dream of phantoms in motion.

It began to rain. Walking alongside a cart, the young woman driving it hailed me. She sat under a wide field umbrella stuck behind her in the seat:

"Is monsieur going to the Halle?"

I didn't wait twice for the invitation. She stopped her horse. "Whoa, whoa." For the brief moment it took me to jump near her over the wheel the other trucks behind us had to stop. "Whoa, whoa" along the line. She took up another moment to make me comfortable by taking something away from along-side the seat.

"What is there? What is there?" came from a hundred throats. A hundred witty remarks accompanied the question.

"Bertha has taken pity on a lone passer-by."

"Is madame happy now?"

"Hey, you, remember we go to the Halle, to the market, and not to the City Hall."

She smiled at me and shrugged her shoulders. I smiled back. The horse was given his head. The rumbling continued.

We were silent for a while.

"Monsieur comes from far? From America? Oh, but monsieur talks French like a Parisian. Oh, no, monsieur, it was just because I thought it isn't good to walk in the rain. Are your feet wet? Wet feet are sure death! My husband died because he caught cold in the rain. He came into the house with wet feet and I knew immediately. Oh, monsieur! Oh."

That ready sentimentality of the French. Tears came gushing into her eyes. How easily they can laugh. How readily they cry . . . light-hearted tears.

"I told him—I told him never to go out in the rain. But he would not listen to me. You know how men are. And you, monsieur, are also the same, I bet, when your wife tells you not to go out in the rain."

And so we chat on for a few minutes. Then there is another "Whoa, whoa" ahead of us. We are perhaps the fiftieth or sixtieth truck. There is congestion on the streets; there are other trucks from other streets in front and back of us. I have become part of the whole. The odor of the soil still clinging to the vegetables in the trucks penetrates me. What a

relief after the artificiality of the city . . . the tinsel and gaudiness and heartbreaking wastefulness of people in cabarets and dancing halls. The long line is formed now. It seems to stretch from one end of the city to the other. As each one nears slowly within the archway, I have a vision of the mouth of a huge monster swallowing everything that comes into it.

With tremendous loads upon their shoulders leaning on their immense white felt hats that cover their necks to half their shoulders, the porters pass back and forth. Women and children with baskets in their hands pour in from every direction upon the Halle like an invading army.

Finally our truck approached the mouth. There was a buyer right there.

"There is great demand for cabbages," my companion told me.

The price was fixed in half a minute. I jumped down from near my companion and holding out my hands I waited for her to throw each cabbage down to pass it along to the buyer. Never had I had such joy in work. Never had I been so absorbed in work. It seemed to me that there was no greater happiness than just to catch cabbages thrown by two stubby hands and being looked in the eyes by a red-cheeked, hard-fleshed, young peasant woman. The end came only too soon.

"Ah, c'est fini." She gathered her skirts about her, wiped her hands on her heavy apron, stood near me, and breathed deeply.

"You wait for me here."

A few minutes later she returned. Her apron pocket was stuffed full with the paper francs she had received in payment. She closed the opening of it with three heavy safety pins in a row. A while later the two of us sat down to an early breakfast, with a bottle of wine between us, in an adjoining restaurant, where other women and other men had already preceded us.

Most of her friends turned their heads away after one look at me. If Bertha had found a friend it was none of their business. We were as alone as if we had been a thousand miles away from the people who knew her and whom she knew. Suddenly she said to me:

"Cabbages are high this year—oh, almost twice as high as they were last year."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, they are high, and the soil of my garden is just fit for cabbages. Did you see them? Big and hard and round."

I saw her notice the width of my shoulders and the depth of my chest.

"I had a man out there working with me, but he isn't much, monsieur. He has been in the war and that's bad. Those who have been in the war are restless. They cannot work long in one place."

"That is so."

"It is a very good place I have, and a nice house. But one is lonesome, monsieur, n'est-ce pas? I was

only married a year. I have no child. One is so lone-some, monsieur; especially in the spring. I work hard, very hard. But the evenings are long. A woman alone is not good. Non, monsieur.

"Any more wine, cheese? No? You worked hard. I always told my husband the first meal is the best. He never liked to eat in the morning. Oh, les hommes, les hommes."

A half-hour later we shook hands as she was taking her place on the seat of the truck. She sighed deeply.

"Well, monsieur, you will remember where it is. You just ask for Bertha. Everybody will show you."

What a different, what a beautiful world from that of running from cabaret to cabaret; restless, joyless, lifeless in spite of the feverishness.

Young men and women going to work stop at the corner and kiss one another good-by. What light-heartedness and eagerness. The Parisian alone knows how to go to work! How passionate the kiss he gives to his wife or to his sweetheart when separating from her on the corner of the street. What beautiful inflection in the jusqu' à ce soir—what tenderness! The stream of workmen becomes thicker and thicker. I think of the young men and young women at the Rotonde and the Select and in the cabarets. They are there because somewhere in Kansas wheat is waving in the field; somewhere in Jersey cabbages and carrots are growing. And golden

corn and apples and grapes. A sense of hopelessness in the younger generation aches through me!

Slowly I walked up the Montmartre heights. I reached the plateau of the Sacré Cœur Church when the first rays of the sun coming from behind the tower were shedding light over the Parisian white-windowed, towered valley at my feet. An eager young American painter, flushed, with sparkling eyes, dressed in a heavy white sport sweater, was trying to catch upon the canvas with color and brush the song of the city below him. I am hopeful again.

Paris in the morning!



OLD MADRID THERE ARE NO SHADOWS



SUNDAYS THE GODLY THIEVES ARE MERCHANTS

OLD MADRID

THERE ARE NO SHADOWS

"What is there to be seen in Madrid?" asked Douglas Fairbanks in the foyer of the Ritz in Madrid. He was toying with his hat and showing off boyishly to the hundred and one Spanish newspaper men who had assembled to interview the "Great Douglas." "Bull-fights," he continued, "but I've seen one." He said this in the manner of the girl who, when asked whether she wanted a book as a gift, said, "I already have one." I spoke to Doug of the Prado, that finest of all museums, of its countless Velasquez, Goyas, Cellinis, and El Grecos. I told him Dora La Cordobezita and La Argentina were dancing that night. Doug "regretted." These things were not important enough to offset his plans.

"I got the freedom of the city, and the chief of police will soon be here to take Mary and myself out for a ride." Riding with the chief of police was in his eyes the next best thing to riding with the

king of Spain.

Spaniards call Madrid villa, a town, and not ciudad, a city. Though built in the sixteenth cen-

tury, Madrid is, in the eyes of Spaniards, a parvenu city, despite its being the residence of the king and the capital of the country. Numbers never counted with Spaniards. Madrid doesn't have the history, the glory of tradition, of Toledo, Alcalá, Aravilla, Granada, and Seville. There are no ancient remains; and even the tower of San Pedro; the church of St. Geronimo, and the Obispo are not enough to give it the flavor the other ancient cities have.

By the time Madrid had become a great city the art of architecture had fallen into lamentable decadence and begun to imitate all the candy-box architecture of France and Austria. The architecture of Versailles is imitated over and over again until even the churches look like the palaces of French courtezans. The royal palace is the greatest sinner. Only the Prado has some individuality; yet the art of architecture has not surpassed in beauty the contents it houses.

My room at the hotel was fully equipped with all the modern conveniences. It had radiators and a wash-stand with hot and cold water faucets. A sunken marble bathtub was promising all the delights of refreshing cleanliness after a long day, which had also included the most wonderful bull-fight of the year. But when I turned on the faucets in the bathroom I had the sickening feeling one has when taking up a disconnected telephone. Dead. I went to the wash-stand. The same results. Looking underneath, I discovered there were no pipes con-

necting the faucets with anything. I tried the radiators. They were just placed in the corner like pieces of furniture. I rang the bell violently, and would talk to nobody but the manager.

"Why be so angry?" that worthy told me. "You don't want a faucet. You want water. I shall send you water. In a few hours there will be enough water for the bathtub. As for heat, it is too warm outside."

"Well, why have you put all these things in?" I asked.

"Señor," he said, "you Americans are a very impatient people. This is a new hotel; it was built only ten years ago. If I were a millionaire I wouldn't build a hotel. I am a poor man, and I cannot do everything at one time. Last year I put in bathtubs and radiators and other things. If God will be good enough to me, in three years from now I hope to put in the maquinaria to produce the heat and the hot water."

The accents of the man melted my heart, and it was I who apologized to him. . . .

Night falls upon Madrid as upon no other city. Streets are almost totally empty the whole afternoon, shops are closed until half-past four; and then, suddenly, the streets become animated and intense, voices rise, and the pulse of the city is beating loud and fast. And dramatically the sky reddens as if set on fire. Successive curtains of darkness are being drawn rapidly. Watching the sky, one can see

how gray, brown, and red mix with the deep indigo blue which comes creeping into the palette painting the night.

Dinner is at half-past nine. The curtain of the theater rises at eleven o'clock. The terraces of the cafés stretch to the border of the sidewalk; and when the tables are all occupied, additional tables extend the cafés to the middle of the street.

I was sitting at one of these tables with my translator, Doña Rioha. We were both slowly sipping absinthe frappés, the favorite drink of the Spanish intellectualia. One of the matadors who had been very successful that afternoon appeared at the café, followed by hundreds of people who acclaimed him. He answered their enthusiasm with smiles and handfuls of silver, for which they scrambled on the floor.

How unheroic he appeared when dressed in simple European garb. How different he looked, as if he were not the same man who, in heavy blue velvet spangled in gold and silver, had gyrated so nimbly before the bull. Short in stature, swarthy as a Gipsy, only the bull-fighter's tremendously long chin made him resemble the celebrated portrait Zuloaga had painted. And he looked so sick and worn; like a convalescent man.

An unending row of beggars was passing between the tables and exhibiting their infirmities, while Gipsy women, with their children in rags, were making a pretense of selling flowers. In all my life I had not seen so many beggars as in the last half-hour at the Puerta del Sol. Doña Rioha was singing to me the praises of modern Spain; the revival of art and literature. I interrupted her, saying that it would be a great thing if they could somehow get rid of their beggars.

"But why get rid of beggars?" Doña Rioha exclaimed. "They are here to remind us of our wellbeing. We Spaniards are realists. We are continually comparing sensations and emotions, and weighing them. Here we are, sipping our absinthe. Do these people sip their absinthe? No. Therefore, our absinthe is better. Do we have the infirmities they exhibit? No. Therefore, we are healthy. You see a man with a crippled arm, and involuntarily you thank God that you are not so crippled yourself. Another man passes by with a crippled foot. Whatever other sorrow you may have, your feet are not crippled. By the time you have taken your apéritif and are ready for your evening meal, you have thanked God for your wholeness. You are content. You have compared your lot with that of the other people you have seen."

Perhaps I did understand Spain better; understood even bull-fights as I had never understood them before. Every time a Spaniard watches an infuriated bull he thanks his God that he is not the horned animal in the arena; and every time the bull-fighter is wounded or killed, a good Spaniard thanks his God it was not he.

The streets were still animated after I had taken

Doña Rioha to her door. The Puerta del Sol, which radiates narrow, winding streets in all directions, is like a huge pool fed by numerous rivers. An unending stream of people came from all sides toward the open square to discuss the gossip and the affairs of the day. Things were not quiet in Barcelona. The news from Morocco had not been very reassuring. Returning soldiers were surrounded by men and women, and questioned. How long was the war going to last?

All the emotions and all the feelings of the capital were pulsating in the numerous groups about the place. The feverish activity of the square came abruptly to an end when nine o'clock was struck by the town clock. People who had seemed inseparably welded together took hasty leave of one another. The human pool that had been filled with the flow of rivers and rivulets dried up suddenly as the waters retired. Only an old blind man, playing a guitar, remained sitting on the curbstone, waiting for a child, who was still begging among the tables, to come and lead him home.

One should get himself very hungry before going to eat in a Spanish restaurant. Hunger being the worst cook, one should wait until one is not appreciative of quality, when no matter what is put before the nose smells and tastes good. And I was terribly hungry. Even meats fried in olive oil did not offend me.

Some forty years ago a young Gipsy woman ap-

peared on the Spanish stage as a singer and dancer. She was not beautiful, but she wore an array of colored high combs which she changed at every performance. She could dance, she could sing, and she possessed that rare secret which makes you forget the specific ability of an artist, and compels you to take him to your heart for reasons you don't know. It is indeed a bad sign when you like so-and-so for her voice, for her dancing, for her acting. The important thing is to like the artist without knowing the specific reason; for an art that is not made evident or obvious. And so the Gipsy girl of forty years ago won great favor with the Spaniards, who called her La Niña de los Peines, the Girl with the Combs.

La Niña is an old lady now, and sits on a chair while she sings. Her swarthy face is seamed with wrinkles. Her straggly coarse hair is all gray. She can dance but a few steps, and that upon the incessant urge of her audience, who cry and beg. Her old voice is cracked; but to the Spaniards she is still La Niña de los Peines, the Girl with the Combs.

The hall was full of people. Three were sitting where there was only place for two, filling the alleys and sideways and thronging the doors. I suffocated. I vowed every time to leave after the next song, and yet I remained to the end, together with thousands of howling, shrieking, exalted Spaniards who had come down from the mountains, two days' mule ride distant, to hear La Niña sing. Faithfulness?

Tradition? What was it that made these people come? What was the reason they had not abandoned her for younger ones when her first youth had passed? Oh, these Spaniards! More Moors than Iberians, with more Hebrew blood in their veins than all the other bloods combined! Hundreds of years mean nothing to them. Cervantes is but a contemporary, Christ as familiar as a bull-fighter. The glory of five hundred years ago is so near, the present vexations don't seem to touch Spain. The echo of what has been becomes louder and louder with time and drowns the sound of to-day's cannon and to-day's cries.

It was one o'clock when I left the theater. "Hello"

Some one tapped me on the shoulder. It was Margaret Johnson. I knew she was in Spain, but I didn't know she was in Madrid. Who at the Algonquin does not remember that exotic, beautiful woman hailing from New England? She had, on her yearly visits to the States, aroused feminine curiosity with her hats and shawls, and masculine admiration by her beauty and the manner in which she spoke English with a Spanish accent. Deliberately or subconsciously she would introduce Spanish words and speak contemptuously of the tourist who invaded her Spain. Her Spain! The whole world knew she was writing a book on the country of her choice. The Algonquin doubted, and ascribed other motives to her voluntary exile to the country of the Cid.

"Saw you sitting in the fifth row. Like La Niña's songs? Yes?"

"Why didn't you come to talk to me during intermissions?" I questioned.

"Wanted to watch you, to see how you liked it. I would never have spoken to you if you hadn't shown enthusiasm."

While she was talking to me, a tall, thin, dark man was standing aside, looking adoringly at her. "Don Piedro," she called. I was introduced to the other man.

"He's a great friend," Juanita (she has changed her name) said to me. "He's illustrating Dostoyevski in Spanish. He speaks French as badly as you do Spanish. The two of you ought to get along well." And the Juanita narrowed her eyes as she looked at me doubtfully, weighing me. "Not sleepy, are you? I know a place where we could go now. I wonder if I should take you."

She turned around and questioned Don Piedro, who assured her that a man who liked La Niña was worthy of such a treat. In a few minutes we were in a cab drawn by four caparisoned mules, belted with rows of little brass bells that tinkled and shook as we drove over the cobblestones of the city.

Juanita insisted on talking Spanish to me. She would not talk English. She asked me what I had done during the day. She wanted to know everything.

We stopped in front of a villa she owned, and

which was being fitted out with all the old Spanish things she had been able to collect during four years' incessant search through the country. She had even gone to Paris to buy Spanish antiques from the horrible Frenchmen who had taken those priceless things out of Spain. Don Piedro was sitting on her left, never saying a word. Though I tried to engage him in conversation, I could see he was enamored of Juanita; enamored as only a Spaniard could be. He could not appreciate or understand the comradeship between the woman and me. We occasionally talked a language which he did not understand, and he wondered and perhaps suspected what I was saying.

And the carriage drove on and on. We were soon out of Madrid. We finally entered through a wide stone gate into a large park, crowded with little flowered trellised baskets.

"I am hungry," Juanita declared, and forthwith clapped her hands loudly. "Leave everything to me," she said when a black-coated gentleman approached us. She talked to him. He led us to an unoccupied basket. "We shall eat first, and then—the entertainment. Ah, you will like that."

Soon after the departure of the black-coated man a half-dozen white-aproned waiters began to set the table, until it looked as if not three but twenty people were expected to eat and drink. Had Margaret Johnson improvised a banquet? But when the food began to arrive, the Spanish lady from New England protested. It wasn't what she had ordered.

She called violently for the black-coated gentleman. When this worthy señor had listened long to what the lady had to say, he answered in perfect English:

"Why does the lady insist on talking Spanish? I didn't understand very well what she said. Had you talked English, I would have known what you wanted."

Juanita rose from the table furiously. That was all. She canceled everything. She was no longer hungry. She vowed she'd never return to the place again. That Spaniard had deliberately insulted her. She turned round with tearful eyes to Don Piedro, "Don't you understand my Spanish?" she asked passionately.

Don Piedro sighed and assured her that he did. "And this is Don Piedro, one of the most famous writers of Spain. And he understands me!"

Oh, for the subtlety of the black-coated man's bow and smile! All the wisdom of the world seemed to be in it. And Juanita had lived long enough in Spain to understand the irony behind it. Don Piedro understood!

As we drove back through the city, I learned that the lady was living at the same hotel I was. It was a pleasant discovery for both of us. But when Juanita explained the coincidence to Don Piedro, he did not seem so happy, and a different light stole into his eyes. His lips whitened. It was not a friendly hand that I shook when I bade him good-night. He watched us walk up the stairway together.

Upon sudden impulse, I went out immediately. I found Don Piedro sitting on a bench in front of the hotel. I hailed him. It made him happy to see me. He was sitting, bending over himself like a jack-knife. He shook my hand twice without saying a word. The intuition of a Spaniard is almost as fine as that of a woman. He knew I had guessed his doubts, and he interpreted my reappearance as a gesture of reassurance for him.

"Where does the señor intend to go now? I am at your service." And I knew that for once a Spaniard meant what he said.

"To the rastro, the thieves' market."

Arranged in narrow alleys, upon a wide square, were little heaps containing all sorts of imaginary things which men and women offered for sale to the passers-by, of which we were among the first. Soon, however, came hundreds of people from every angle. In one heap there were pocketbooks, revolvers, knives, paintings, clothes of all descriptions, and ivory canes. In another heap, watched over by a tall Gipsy, were watches, rings, shoes, and swords.

Beside a huge pile of old toreador clothes stood a man in the fifties, his eyes shaded by a battered old sombrero; the rest of his face almost buried under his coat. Don Piedro's hand reached for mine. A tremor passed through his sensitive body. He closed his eyes as if he were ready to faint; though fascinated by the old pile of colored velvets and the man who stood behind it. He dragged me aside.

"Come quickly from here. This is an old toreador selling his things. The things in which he had won glory and thousands of pesetas."

When we had walked away, Don Piedro turned around again. Two lithe young Gipsies were bar-

gaining with the man for the clothes.

And Don Piedro said: "The buyer will fight in these clothes to-morrow, and perhaps cover them with glory. And then, when the *torero* is crippled or disabled, these same clothes, patched and repaired, will again appear at the *rastro*, to be bought by others and others."

Suddenly, switching off from the vein of reminiscence, Don Piedro asked me: "Have you seen the garb of the old toreadors at the museum? They are made of indestructible material."

Everything that is stolen or begged in Spain during the week finds its way to the rastro every Sunday morning. Not a thing is too cheap or too costly to be there. It is brought in pockets, in bundles, on the backs of donkeys, in haycarts, in battered automobiles. An unwritten law protects stolen goods after the week is up. You can go and buy it back at the rastro, telling the man behind the heap of rags that it was yours once. But if you do so, you may have to pay a higher price, pay for the sentimental value it must have for a former owner, a value which it has not to the ordinary passer-by.

I suddenly reached for my pocketbook and placed it inside my coat. Don Piedro explained to me that

nothing is ever stolen at the *rastro*. You can leave your belongings in the middle of the street and no one will touch them. It is a tradition, and Spanish traditions are never broken. We stopped before several piles to buy knickknacks here and there. Seeing Don Piedro's spirits flag because I bought feminine things, I explained that they were for some one dear to me in the States. Instantly he offered me as a present everything he had bought.

At the Britinia, where we stopped for breakfast, a troupe of four Gipsies and their wives was dancing and singing Flamenco songs to a crowd of revelers so fresh and so untired that I did not know whether they were late revelers of the previous night or whether they had started their Sunday early.

And suddenly I discovered that my watch had been stolen. Don Piedro refused to believe that the century-old tradition about the *rastro* had been broken. In his eyes the traditions of the whole of Spain, the traditions of centuries, were involved. Spain's glory and literature, Spain's art and religion, the honor of all Spain were involved in the stealing of my watch in the *rastro*. He turned savagely upon me:

"And how do you know that I have not taken it? Yes, what makes you so certain I have not taken your watch?"

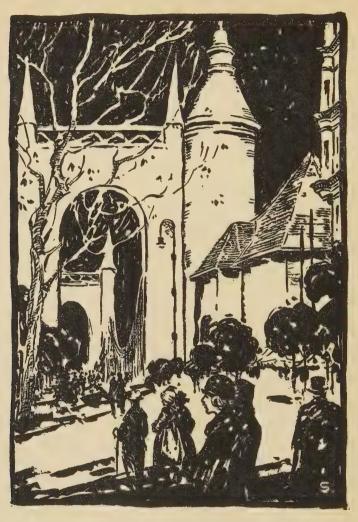
When I refused to understand, he said, "That is why foreigners will never understand Spain. And that is why we will never become the country of tourists like France. You will never understand the depths of our traditions. Your watch was not stolen at the *rastro*, señor. It is against its traditions," he cried.

Don Piedro was so angry, I made believe I believed. And he breathed with relief when I told him of my intention to leave Madrid that very morning. I asked him to convey my regrets to Doña Juanita. It was a sudden decision.

At the door of the hotel a number of cripples and beggars stood ready to offer an opportunity to the visitors to begin their day right by thanking God for their wholeness, health, and wealth.



BUDAPEST GENIUS MUST LIVE



BUDAPEST-JAZZ AND GIPSIES

BUDAPEST

GENIUS MUST LIVE

FLEEING the Vienna riots in the summer of 1927, I arrived in Budapest at midnight. The overcrowded train coach which had taken me from the border of Hungary to the capital had been anything but comfortable. I was hungry, sleepy, thirsty, and wet to the skin from a long stay in the open, waiting for the train during a heavy rain. My thoughts and desires were centered on the long sleep I hoped for between white and dry sheets; but it was not to be as I had planned.

The hotel on the Danube where I had stayed before was overcrowded, as were several smaller hotels, and the only one that could take me in was a hostelry not far from the railroad station, anything but clean, anything but comfortable, noisy, stuffy, and the walls covered with a yellow paper that made me fidgety beyond belief: I wondered whether many homes and many long friendships had not been broken because of the color of wall-paper.

On the terrace of the café, on the ground floor of the hostelry, a Gipsy band played a czardas that began by being very pleasant to the ear, but threatened, because of its repetition, to drive me mad. However, refreshed by a long drink of Tokay wine and some food, the Gipsies and their melodies as well as the guests took on a more pleasant appearance, and I could begin to distinguish individual faces and take interest in the behavior and actions of

people at the neighboring tables.

"Hello," came a voice from behind me. Turning my head, I saw one of New York's well-known columnists in the company of two beautiful ladies. A few minutes later I had joined them at their table and a fresh bottle of wine and fresh glasses animated the conversation as well as the faces and the eyes of my companions. One of the ladies, young and vivacious, with large dark eyes and Titian hair, "belonged" to the Nemseti Szinhas, the National Theater, and the other, a vivid blonde, "belonged" to the Nepszinhaz, the People's Theater. They were "artistes." Budapest is full of them. Half of Hungary is writing plays. The other half plays them.

That I had come from Vienna, and had witnessed the riots, was interesting enough to the ladies the first few moments; for they wanted to know details about what had happened. The censor of the Magyar papers had come down so heavily, the news was both meager and unreliable. And they knew Vienna, the "artistes" and the New York columnist, they knew it as well as their own shores, though the distance is one of many hours' train ride. But what

interested them even more was that I had just come from New York. Before long I concluded that the friendship they showed to my friend was based on the fictitious hopes he encouraged in them that he could hoist them on the American stage—on the dollar stage.

I remembered with what scorn the intellectuals of the Magyar capital once looked upon and spoke of the great city on the Hudson. Was their changed attitude due to our advancement or their poverty?

The young ladies had paid no attention to the playing of the Gipsies, yet when, for some reason or another, the band had struck up a lively jazz tune, their bodies began to twitch and sway with the same abandon I have seen in many of my Harlem neighbors. I could not bring the women to talk of Hungary and of Budapest while jazz was being played. Budapest was dead. New York—New York was the only city in the world. To change or to animate the conversation, I said something about the inability of European musicians to play jazz tunes. Europeans play jazz too tamely.

"Oh," protested the dark-eyed lady, "but you should hear me play jazz! I have been taught by an American." And as if ashamed that she had taken all the credit for herself, she said: "And Theresa plays it as well as I do, if not better. All Hungarian musicians love jazz. It is America's great contribution to the world. We would have died of boredom had jazz not come to save us after the war. We

could no longer listen to our classics after the cannon and the bombs. Jazz, oh, jazz!"

After all, Africa had contributed more to American influence in Europe than all arts and industries combined; with the grandiose poster advertisements of safety-razors and typewriting-machines and soaps added.

Another bottle of Tokay and we were friends addressing one another by our Christian names; and since the New York columnist paid his attention to the blonde lady, I devoted myself to the dark-eyed one. A few minutes later I knew the major and important part of her life history. Her jewel-covered hands, busy with bottle and glass and cigarettes, emphasized the more striking points of her story effectively.

Her origin, she said, was a mystery to her. I immediately knew that there was a Gipsy in the woodpile somewhere. Her mother had been a celebrated singer. She herself was only twenty-two and had tremendous successes, "artistic successes," she emphasized. "At the present time in Hungary one can hope for nothing else."

She caught the glance of my eye upon her jewel-covered fingers and hands, and feeling that it needed explanation, she said rapidly:

"All these things were gotten for almost nothing. The nobility was so anxious and eager to get money in their hands."

The music had stopped playing. My New York

friend rose and suggested that he had to take Theresa home immediately; yet if we were kind enough to wait for him, he would soon return.

How well my dark-eyed companion and myself understood the maneuver that had saved both situations. It allowed him to leave and it left us alone. Theresa played excellently the tired girl. She yawned, she stretched, she fluttered her eyelashes. She was so, so tired. "Yoy Ishtenem."

They had no sooner gone than my companion suggested that we leave the place also.

"But what about him?" I said, making believe I hadn't understood. "He will come back, won't he?"

"No, he never will come back," she said, smiling understandingly. "He only wanted to leave us alone; because I find you so sympathetic!"

I involuntarily touched my wallet in the breast-pocket.

We were in a carriage a few moments later; without waiting for my assent, she gave the driver orders to go to the Corsico. We drove around the park silently, almost moodily, crossing other carriages that seemed to turn endlessly without aim, without purpose, in a circle, with couples reclining sleepily on the cushion seats.

After a while, when we had driven out from the Corsico and gone to the Budavara, and from there again to the driveway along the Danube, I turned bruskly to my companion and said:

"San tu Rom? Are you a Gipsy?"

I don't know what made me ask her that. Nothing in her face or in her behavior suggested Gipsy origin. Perhaps a peculiar warmth that emanated from her body had prompted the question.

She didn't reply but ordered the driver on to a

café I did not know.

"Where are we going?" I questioned.

"I am thirsty," she answered.

After that we didn't exchange a dozen words between us. My question hung like a pall. The carriage stopped in front of the terrace of a halfdeserted café where a few Gipsy fiddlers were scraping away in a sort of violent sentimentality at a Hungarian air. Before sitting down at a table, Maria pointed out to me a celebrated playwright, whose Wildeish face is well known on two continents. He was leaning backward on a chair, his heavy eyes half closed, while a dozen men and women sitting around talked to him all at once, eagerly and passionately. From time to time he raised a jeweled hand to silence one or to stimulate another talker, and then relapsed into his Buddha attitude. I had never thought such a thing possible, but truly the man's face and pose made one think how Buddha would have looked if he had had Oscar Wilde's face.

"This is how he falls asleep," my companion explained. "He has tried everything, but this is his latest narcotic discovery. He has hired people to talk him to sleep. He pays with American money for

their dinners and their wines. He keeps two of them on day and night shifts so that they should talk him to sleep. They are like an orchestra, and he directs their conversation. Two talk French, one English, another one Italian. They must speak only foreign tongues. It doesn't matter what they say, but they must talk incessantly, and when he has fallen asleep they stop talking at once, hail a carriage, and take him home. Sometimes they let him sleep like this in his chair until morning."

At another table sat a well-known composer of musical comedy. Not to be outdone by the neurotic eccentricity of the playwright, the musician, sitting alone at a table, had a dozen colored candles, stuck in gullets of bottles, burning before him. He continually rearranged them in different positions—first in a circle, then in a cross. And when the candles had all burned out, he fell asleep on his arms on the table. The Magyar intellectuals were eagerly discussing which was the most artistic and eccentric manner—being talked to sleep or being made drowsy by the flicker of colored candle-light.

"And what is your method?" Maria asked me.

"I? I fall asleep when I am sleepy, without aid or fuss."

"Oh, then you are not a genius."

"No."

When another bottle of Tokay had been drunk and my dark-eyed beauty had consumed a tremendous quantity of food, I suggested the night had

advanced far enough into the morning. Dawn was breaking. Low-wheeled horse-drawn farm trucks laden with vegetables were on the way to the market. The rumble and grind upon the cobble-stone pavement was only a little more unpleasant than the odor of decay and that other smell of the streets on the summer nights when the roads have somewhat cooled from the day's heat.

"Shall we go?"

"Not yet," Maria answered. And then, impulsively, she said: "Would you come to the aid of a Rom?" She bent low over the table toward me, her eyes boring mine with that fixed stare of the Gipsies I know so well. Her breath came rapidly, her bosom heaved, her hands twitched nervously.

"What is it?"

"I am in love!" she said intensely.

I recoiled as from a fury.

"Not with you," she said rapidly. "But why is it that when I say that, you withdraw as if you were scared?"

"Because it was so sudden." I apologized stupidly.

"Ah, but all men withdraw like that from me. First they are attracted, and then when I answer their passion they draw back. There is a curse upon

me. I know. I know."

I wanted to tell her that it was because of her Gipsy stare and her overpowering intensity, which I had realized, but she said: "There he comes!"

A portly, middle-aged, long-mustached Hungarian, dressed faultlessly and twirling a cane in his hand, appeared walking flat-footedly between the tables. He greeted her with an indifferent gesture. She answered as indifferently, as if he did not concern her at all, and becoming, in appearance, more intimate with me, she put her hands upon mine on the table and patted them familiarly. "Will you come to the assistance of a *Rom?*" she pleaded, almost under her breath.

"Is it his money or his titles, or is he also a genius?" I queried.

"It is because of neither of these things. If you must know, he is poor and stupid. Yet like many other women, I love him."

I looked at the man and our glances met. His beady eyes moved rapidly like two small mice. His waxed, graying, long mustache gave his sallow fat face a greasy, disagreeable appearance.

Maria exulted. "Oh, show yourself more friendly to me! Take hold of my hands. Do something! He must be made to think you are in love with me; that I am in love with you." She pleaded. "I want him, I desire him."

For want of anything better, I ordered another bottle of wine and, as if by an inspiration, called ton, the Gipsy leader, to play jazz tunes.

"That is so good of you," she said. "Now he will know from what country you come. That was wonderful. Later you should ask Rumanian tunes. He hates Rumanians. Please do as I tell you. Thanks, Rom."

She brought her chair nearer mine. Her right hand touched my left under the table. Her fingers were ice cold. I ordered a Rumanian tune. While the bottle was still half full she rose. "Now let's go. Make as if you are in a hurry to take me home. Leave the bottle undrunk and the food on the table. A sudden desire to take me home. Do so. Please, please," she begged.

I did as she asked me to. Always ready to assist a *Rom* in need, I used the coyest manner when help-

ing her with her wrap.

At the door the portly Magyar stepped between us. I was holding her hand. He separated us with a brusk gesture.

"How dare you!" Maria cried to him.

Sticking my face into the eyes of the man, I raised my fists.

In an instant the whole café was in an uproar. The fat Buddha-Wilde-combination awoke from its sleep. The music composer arose to rearrange the half-burnt candles. The leader of the orchestra, still playing his violin, came out to see what was happening. Maria was screaming and attempting to free her wrist from the big black hairy hand which had seized it.

Forgetting that I had merely played a comedy, I came bravely to the defense of the lady. With a downward movement of the sharp of the palm, I

broke his hand loose from her wrist and pinned his arms down. He was flabby and weak. His face had become puffy and red. He was breathing so heavily, his thick lips spluttered but could not pronounce a single word. He was in a towering rage.

Maria was screaming and laughing at the same time. I hailed a carriage and, bidding her to step in, I got ready to push the man far enough from me to step beside her into the carriage.

At that moment the fat Buddha touched my shoulders in a friendly manner and bade me release the man's hands.

"Not so, my friend. He is a fool but he is a great man. Be careful."

The fat man brushed his sleeves as if I had soiled them. For a moment we looked at one another furiously, and then as the lady was leaning eagerly forward to see what was going to happen, he stepped into the carriage with great dignity and gave directions. The hero!

When the driver had whipped his horse, Maria called to me in pure Calo: "A Rom always comes to the assistance of another Rom." Bending back she threw me a kiss.

"I shall put that in my new play," the Buddha said, closing his heavy eyelids. "But this is the fourth time she has done it to him. Is he so stupid as not to understand, or is it a deliberate play between them? A new quirk in their relations?"

NIGHTS ABROAD

Buddha invited me to his table. When we had exchanged a few words, he leaned back in his chair and said wearily:

"It is too bad you are soon going away. If you could stay here a few weeks it would be so fine. Your voice does put me to sleep."

VIENNA WHERE WALTZES RING



RIOTING IN THE STREETS OF VIENNA

VIENNA

WHERE WALTZES RING

THE bell-boy of the hotel at Munich told me that one of the guests, a Mr. Wolfheil, wished to see me.

"Wolfheil of the World Wide Photo Company. Saw your name on the hotel register. Know many friends of yours in New York. Hello!"

I looked my visitor over. Brown clothes, a wide

brow, nervous hands, full lips.

"Make yourself at home here, Wolfheil." And, after he had sat down near the window and mopped his forehead, I suggested:

"Beer? It's so hot here."

"Let's go to the Hofbräuhaus," he answered.

We marched side by side and entered the highceilinged, reeking drinking-place in silence. A stout, flat-footed waitress showed us to a table and served us with two tall glasses of foaming beer.

"Going to Vienna on business to-morrow," Wolfheil said. "Have a hunch something is going to happen there soon. Because of the Schattuck trial. Poor Vienna. I like Vienna Like Vienna a lot. Nice people. Beautiful town. Fine theaters. Poor Vienna.

Want to come along with me? Good. Atta boy! Let's have another glass. It's infernally hot. Fräulein . . . here, here. *Noch Zwei*. Train leaves eight forty-six in the morning. Will knock at your door in time."

The trumpets blared their loudest. The saber-marked students sang at the top of their voices. Wolfheil slipped into slumberland. However, he came quickly to life when I got into a fisted argument with some one who had pestered me. My newly found companion played his elbows so well, I inquired on the way home:

"Played football a lot?"

"A little. No more than any New York boy, I guess."

We shook hands at my door.

"Good-night. Will arrange for tickets with the porter. By the way, second class, eh? Will knock at your door in time. Good-night."

I had talked all the way from Munich until a few stations before Vienna. Wolfheil was a willing victim, a good listener, and he had understanding eyes.

When the train had stopped at a little station, our conductor appeared at our compartment with the announcement: "Krawall in Wien" (trouble in Vienna).

Krawall in Wien because of the Schattuck trial! Ours was the last train going in or out of Vienna.

A general strike had been declared by the Austrian workingmen's organization.

"In Vienna I always stay at the Bristol, Wolf-

heil. Where will you be?"

"Don't know. Will look you up. Wish we were there already," and my friend began to bite his nails impatiently.

"Don't worry," I consoled him. "The Krawall

will still be on when we get there."

"Gee, I'd hate to miss it," he answered. The placid, quiet man had in one minute been transformed into an eager hunter.

When we arrived at the railroad station of Vienna, there were no porters, no gold-braided officials, no taxis, no carriages, and everybody talked in subdued voices, as if afraid to arouse to still greater fury the incomprehensible monster that broods over the whole of Europe.

I stood by my baggage, hesitating between several courses of action. Wolfheil, who traveled lightly, said a hasty good-by and bolted out of the station.

It was getting dark. I was freighted down with heavy luggage, for I was on my way to Rumania and the East. Like a dumb cow with her young, a Russian peasant woman stood by a heap of bundles, holding a silent, stubby little girl by the hand. An English family on vacation, father, mother, two beautiful, tall and blue-eyed girls, all dressed in gray tweeds and bareheaded, stood watch over a

huge pile of trunks and leather satchels, and wondered what could be done. The man repeated again and again: "Impossible. This is the Orient Express. They can't stop this train!" English, he refused to understand that a spoke had been put in the wheels of the civilization for which he was responsible.

I have forgotten to say that my little daughter was with me. She held on to my hand, and her ten years wondered why the "biggest and strongest" did not know what to do. "Wolfy" had gone, and we were left behind!

Oh, what luck! An acquaintance. A woman and her son.

"How unexpected!"

"Will you take us in? A roof over our heads!"

"Great heavens! Of course. My home is but a poor roof, yet such as it is . . ." And to her son she said: "Why do you look on? Take two satchels. I take two. You take the rest. Come. Ah, the poor child!"

Little Mirel shot a disapproving glance. She was nobody's poor child! She stuck her hand into one of my pockets and trailed along.

People were running to and fro. Thick smoke was rising, spiral-like, in heavy columns over the roofs of the city. Tongues of fire were leaping in the air. Clanging ambulances, escorted by young men and women wearing red bands on their sleeves and waving red and white flags, were whirring by rapidly, the streets being cleared for them by blue-bloused,

earnest young men, who stood watch on every corner.

We were in Mariahilferstrasse, the business street of Vienna. Machine-guns, mounted on trucks, were rattling away, spitting cold steel against the stone of the buildings. Within ten minutes the possession of the wide street had passed twice from the hands of the workingmen into those of the police, who rode upon the mob, hacking stupidly away with their sabers. Our hostess' home was around the corner from a hardware shop. As we passed by, a dozen youths ripped open the rolled-steel blinds of the windows and doors and filled their hands and pockets with revolvers, guns, and knives. Before we had entered our door it sounded like a Fourth of July celebration gone astray.

My hostess and her son threw down the bags they carried and ran screaming up the stairs. Carrying all the heavy bags on my shoulders, I knocked violently at a door behind which I heard loud screams in a somewhat familiar voice. We were hugged and kissed, and mother and son tried to explain their cowardice. Little Mirel was docile but not friendly to them. They had left us in the lurch when we

were in danger.

Alone in our room, the child closed the door; and as I put my Colt on the table she looked up and said:

"Dad, don't you think that I too ought to have one like this?"

Outside, machine-guns were rattling. Revolvers were fired. Smoke, fire, cries, screams, and the ugly noises of angry mobs.

Could that be Vienna? Lovely Vienna, so gentle and so maidenishly simple and easily amused! Could this mob have been the gentle Viennese? Vienna, the city of theaters, of music, of musical comedy? Vienna with its half-French architecture, and candy-box palaces?

Suddenly ten-year-old pulled my sleeve.

"Am hungry, terribly hungry."

"Just a minute." I called my hostess. "Give her something to eat. The child has not eaten since noon."

Eat! Their maid (for, in spite of poverty, they kept a maid to maintain their rank in society) had sold the last pieces of silver to buy food a few days ago. The tin spoons bought to replace the ones she sold were so costly, she hardly squeezed out food for one meal from the deal. The family lived in a magnificent apartment for which they paid almost nothing a year. The large rooms were beautifully furnished. Only the carpets had gone; I could see the marks on the parquet floors where they had lain.

Outside, the muffled rumbling of machine-guns contemptuously spitting steel upon a mob that answered to the insult with behemothlike bellowing. . . .

Ten-year-old forgot the cowardice at the foot of the stairway.

"Papa, go out and get food for everybody!" Then she went to play with the children. The whole family was hungry, and she was certain that I alone could do something for them.

Groups of workingmen and their wives congregated in corners and talked softly among themselves. The Palace of Justice was burning, to satisfy a cheap symbolism. But there were other griefs to air. Vienna was hungry.

I had gone out to buy food; but the crowd's movement downward toward the seat of the trouble awakened my reporter instinct and my sympathies. The police had shot into the mob without provocation. The mob had answered by clubbing policemen; uniformed men and civilians were enemies to death. The original cause of the riots was forgotten. It was a fight between uniformed men and civilians. I forgot little ten-year-old waiting for me in the room, and let myself be taken into this whirl, yelling loudly and unconsciously the same imprecations and curses against the police as the people who were surrounding me. Before I knew it I had a stick in my hand.

A group of mounted police rode upon us, hacking away with their swords as they pressed us back. A hundred feet of massed flesh was between me and the first row of policemen. The women shrieked, even less willing than the men to concede an inch of ground. Hit by a stone, one of the horses reared

and shook off its rider. I knew then that something terrible was going to happen. I closed my eyes and let myself be swayed this way and that, and listened to fierce cries of joy. When I came to, a sickening gulp still choking me, young boys were carrying upon a tall stick the uniform of the policeman. The man was dead; his horse disemboweled. My feet were in a pool of blood.

Other horses reared; bullets passed over my head. Policemen were now galloping away, leaving several of their comrades on the pavement. Exuberantly, the women leading, the mob now pressed forward, brandishing their sticks in the air to invisible enemies. A red-headed woman took possession of my hat and jammed it over her ears while saying something friendly which I couldn't understand. A young giant, with a comely face, dressed in the blue blouse of the workingman, took the stick out of my hand. We were laughing and joking as we ran. Mariahilferstrasse was ours; but not for long.

The "Ring," the objective of the crowd, was already in sight, when two ominous-looking military trucks, with bullet-spitting machine-guns mounted on the driver's seat and six carbine-firing policemen on each side, came rolling forward.

Like scampering mice, men and women searched for the smallest hole in which to hide themselves, sniffing at every crack, flattening themselves against doors, filling hallways, always running, yelling at the death-dealing enemy behind. Like water from a hose, the steel was being sprayed upon the moving flesh.

I crushed myself behind a narrow stairway in a hall. When I came out of my hiding-place everything was quiet again. I remembered little ten-year-old and the hours I had left her alone. I counted upon her understanding nature and a few packages of chocolate which I remembered having stored away in one of my bags. I began by slinking along the walls. Others followed me silently. This time each man was for himself; we were no crowd. The crowd spirit had been broken. We were single individuals, trying to reach cover and safety as quickly as we could. The wide street was empty; no one dared to get off the sidewalk.

I had already covered ten blocks and congratulated myself upon the nearness to my home, when I was suddenly startled by the purring of an engine. The iron doors of a garage opened and out came a small car with a large white sign, on which was printed in large letters: "Automobile Driving School." A young bespectacled man was clumsily but tightly holding on to the steering-wheel. The driving instructor was guiding his hands. It was the best place and the best time to learn how to drive a car! Mariahilferstrasse was free of traffic.

I couldn't help laughing. The fifty behind me and an equal number on the opposite sidewalk didn't see the humor of the thing. The automobile instructor was doing something against the rules of

the general strike. The scattered mice were a compact mass again. Voices rose. The car was torn to pieces. The bespectacled young man disappeared in the crowd. A few revolver shots were fired, a police patrol appeared on foot. We were again in the middle of the street and running toward the "Ring." Scaffolds about buildings that were being erected came down in a jiffy. We had sticks in our hands.

Some one called out the word "barricades." Soon the mounted police were on top of us, shooting as rapidly as they could load their guns. I ran ahead, conscious of the fact that I was at least an hour's distance from where some one was anxiously waiting for me, and found myself in front of the Bristol Hotel. The fire of the Palace of Justice was burning brightly; the smoke was thicker than ever. There were distant noises, cries, shrieks, reports of guns... but these noises were muffled . . . far away. . . .

Daylight was breaking. Seated upon benches on the boulevard were couples busily and ardently making love to one another; as if what was going on around them was happening on another planet. I was looking for a place to sit down. I was tired. I saw a bench on which a man was seated alone. I sat near him.

"This is not," he said, "a night for a stranger to go out strolling."

"Why are you here?" I asked.

"I...I., well, I couldn't go home. I started on my way home last night. But I couldn't

get there. The same thing must have happened to these others."

"And the women?"

The man raised his shoulders.

"Women . . . in such times they are worse than ever."

As we were talking, the doors of the café were opened from the inside. In a quarter of an hour there were at least a dozen guests seated in front of steaming coffee-pots on tables upon the sidewalks, laughing, saying little nothings to one another, as lovers will.

Except for the litter on the streets and the half-demolished barricades, Mariahilferstrasse was quiet again. A little farther on, however, I saw a large group gathering in the center of the street. A familiar voice was raised in an attempt at forceful explanation. Something crashed in the air. Wolfheil's camera had been smashed because he had been taking pictures of a dead horse. This was their own Krawall and they were Viennese . . . and they didn't want the fair name of their city dishonored by such photographs. The civic consciousness of the Viennese had smothered their riotous spirits.

I yanked Wolfheil out of the crowd and pushed him ahead of me, angered.

"What on earth are you doing?" I asked him.

"Taking pictures," he answered. "I've got to take pictures of everything that happens."

"But can't you see they will never let you take

pictures?"

"They won't, huh? What do you know about that? I have half a dozen film rolls in my pockets. As soon as I take a picture or two, I take the film roll out of my camera. If you think I haven't got a picture of the dead horse, you're mistaken!"

Nothing else mattered. Bullets had whizzed by his ears; his clothes had been torn; he could hardly stand on his feet; but he was jubilant. He was

happy. He had taken pictures!

Storekeepers were now timidly opening their shops. I filled my arms with packages of food as I

went along.

When I arrived home, I found everybody anxiously waiting for me; but they forgot their anxiety at the sight of food. My hostess, mistress of the house, ordered the hungry maid about. A maid was a maid; she belonged to another caste; and there are menial things that only a maid should do.

I tiptoed into my room. Ten-year-old was sleeping peacefully. Bending over to kiss her, I saw my Colt, which she had placed under her head before

closing her tired eyes.

BUCHAREST

HOME . . . HOME



BUCHAREST-NEXT DAY THE KING DIED

BUCHAREST

HOME ... HOME

I HAD arrived at Bucharest early that evening, coming from Vienna, where I had witnessed the five-day revolution—the unnecessary shooting and killing of hundreds of people and the wanton destruction of monuments and buildings. A letter from the Princess Marthe de Bibesco, waiting for me at the hotel. asked me to come up to her home in the Carpathian Mountains as soon as I possibly could set out. The hotel, considered the best in the country, large vestibules, broad staircases, high ceilings, and wide corridors, had been the headquarters of the German military staff during the war. It still bore the marks left by them. The foyer had been used to shelter the horses of the military commander and his assistants. While the high officers were working, or amusing themselves, drinking wine in company with beautiful women, their saddle-horses were kept in readiness.

In other countries such damages would have been repaired a week after the enemy left, but in Rumania, where Oriental fatalism is wife to Latin red tape and mistress to Slavic "I don't careness," such things wait. Next year. In ten years. When something unusual will happen.

The street in front of the royal palace, deserted but a few moments before, became animated for the usual before-dinner promenade of the corseted, perfumed, powdered, and rouged army officers. This evening promenade in front of the palace takes place with the regularity of a religious ritual. The throng struggles to keep foot upon the narrow sidewalk and not be pushed into the gutter. The number of tall, well-built, full-bodied, elegantly dressed ladies with beautiful faces and large languorous black eyes increased as the evening wore on. After a while the promenaders, having done their duty, disappeared as suddenly as they had appeared, leaving the sidewalk in possession of these ladies, walking singly and in pairs, and the corseted, powdered, perfumed officers, whose hands were occupied dangling swords and twisting mustaches. The churchbells began to ring and immediately afterward black-bearded, pale-faced, black-robed popes began to pass hurriedly and disappear behind doors of wine-houses, for the customary before-dinner apéritif.

My daughter pulled my sleeve and said, pointing to the officers, "The uniforms of these officers were made by fashionable Parisian dressmakers and not by tailors." She was right.

The royal palace, sprawling on the edges of an

open square, silent and dark till now, became animated, and lights began to appear here and there. On the terrace of a café adjoining the king's home white tables sprawled way out in the middle of the sidewalk. A band of Gipsies were sawing away indifferently at the latest popular French melody, which they followed up with howling jazz and sobbing, weeping, sentimental Irving Berlin waltzes.

Half-naked, dark-brown little Gipsy girls, the open shirts exposing prematurely budding breasts, disheveled, dirty, but still fascinatingly beautiful, zigzagged between tables, offering the latest newspapers, flowers, baskets, candies, and themselves. Peasants, barefoot, their middle rifts covered by a wide red sash over the homespun shirt hanging to the ankles, walked slowly by, looking this way and that, as if in search of something.

The blue of the sky began to be sprinkled thicker and thicker with silver tassels. The streets became livelier. There was light in every window. The houses seemed bathed in light. A thousand pianos seemed to be going at once. Beethoven mingled with Chopin. The jazz of a Gipsy orchestra overpowered the articulateness of a Bach prelude, played at an open window by a long-haired youth, who turned his face outward to see whether he had an audience.

I had read tales of hardships and poverty, of despondency after a bad agricultural year. Tales of failures and bankruptcies of merchants—and here I was among people who seemed not to have a care in the world. They were dancing, singing, eating, drinking, amusing themselves with the air of people accustomed to amuse themselves.

Hei de da. I had come home to my own country, expecting to weep with them over their sorrows, but instead of that I found myself in the midst of a gay party. I had come to a sick man and found him dancing.

I hadn't heard a Rumanian word spoken since I had come out to the street! People spoke nothing but French, with an occasional sprinkling of German. It was only then that I understood a remark made by a newspaper man: "Ah! you still speak our tongue." I had thought he meant that I still remembered my mother tongue after an absence of years, but what he had meant was that I still spoke the language which the others seemed to be ashamed of. Even the Gipsy children offered their wares in French. I hastily took two newspapers from one of the venders. One was in Rumanian, the other was printed in French. What an impossible language my mother tongue had become! It was full of French and German words, and misspelled and misplaced English words. Had I not known these languages, I would have needed a dictionary to understand what was written.

I brought my daughter back to the hotel. She was tired and I was anxious to be alone on the streets. Accompanied by the editor of a newspaper, I went out for dinner. Parisian-gowned ladies and well-

dressed men already occupied most of the tables. What a profusion of diamonds and jewels! Sipping cool champagne, my host poured out a long series of woes and complaints about the poverty-stricken country.

"There is no sign of poverty I could see. I have seen no richer people nor gayer people in all my travels."

"Ah," he answered, "it is because you have forgotten how we have been before. As to this exhibition of riches. I know these people. They owe ten times as much as they own. Nothing belongs to them."

"If it doesn't belong to them, it belongs to somebody else," and I was about to launch out upon a long dissertation on economic truths, when my attention was attracted by a gorgeous creature who, though slim and small, filled with her presence the wide palatial entrance of the restaurant.

"Who is this?" I asked.

"Why, it is Lopska, the celebrated Russian dancer."

"What is she doing here?"

"She dances. . . occasionally," my host answered, winking and smiling slyly. "She dances when Prince Dimitri is not here."

Our eyes met and she smiled. A group of young officers and a number of frock-coated, elderly baldheaded men left their tables, surrounded her, each offering her his compliments and table. There was

not one unoccupied table in the place. She looked between their shoulders in my direction, but as she didn't read any invitation in my eyes, she chose the table of a heavy-stomached, short, puggy-faced, bald-headed, pig-eyed individual, and followed him to his table, passing between a row of obsequiously bowing waiters and mustache-twirling young officers.

"Who is he," I asked my companion, "and why has she chosen his table?"

"Officially, nobody; actually he holds the Government in his hand. These last six months he had been ruining Prince Dimitri to get the dancer away from him. The whole world will know to-morrow that he has succeeded; otherwise she would not have sat down to eat at his table. What the prince has given her is probably the only things left of a huge fortune."

After a short pause my friend continued, "Who says that romance has died out?"

Romance, indeed. An old profligate buying a woman on the auction-block. She was beautiful, not in an obvious pictorial way, as most women of Bucharest, but of a subtle, perverse, lotus kind of beauty.

"Watch the officers. They know by now that Prince Dimitri's power is gone, together with his wealth. They have turned their backs on the table occupied by the dancer. They don't want to be accused by the old man of blinking at her. Fear is much more powerful than desire. There is plenty of romance in these officers, but no chivalry, not one drop," and having sipped another glass of champagne my friend continued, "She looks in your direction. Don't you make her a sign to come over."

"What makes you think she would come?" I

questioned.

"Because you have just arrived from the country of dollars. She keeps a watchful eye on the guest list of the hotel. And to intrigue the old man. Watch out now. She is looking at our table again. If the old man sees it, you will have to leave to-morrow. No greater power in this country could keep you here when he doesn't want you."

And because he had said so, I raised my glass and bowed to her. She answered my gesture with a slight inclination of the head and a smile. The old man turned his head slowly. I had never before seen a face that disgusted me more. He bowed.

This play had not escaped the Gipsy band leader playing upon the raised platform in the center of the restaurant. New fire came to his fiddle. His impetuousness communicated itself to the other players. He tossed his head back, raised the neck of his violin, and bit sharply into the rhythm of an old Gipsy song. I hadn't looked at him until then. Where had I seen that face before? And suddenly I remembered. He was an old playmate of mine. We had both studied the violin under the same Gipsy teacher in a village on the shores of the Danube.

I had met him again years later, when he was playing in a New York café. So he was home again, Tanasi! And he had seen me. He knew I loved that melody. It was his way of greeting me. Everybody turned around. It was evident he was playing just for me. The dancer leaned sentimentally on her arm to look at the iridescent light of a half-filled glass. The old man leaned forward, his pudgy hand creeping up to reach her delicate long fingers that were withdrawn just as slowly.

"You will be called to the police to-morrow," my companion said. "Your papers will not be found in order, and you will be lucky if given twenty-four hours in which to leave the country. And I have so much wanted you to stay here for at least a week."

I didn't answer. I was not interested in what he said. The Gipsy playing had stirred memories.

"When they call you to-morrow, let me know so that I can accompany you to the police station. The chief, who prides himself on being literary, is a friend of mine."

And still I paid no attention to what he said. The dancer beckoned the playing Gipsy, who walked up to her table, fiddle in hand, and whispered something to him. He ended abruptly the melody, said something to the other players, and began on a melody she had suggested. It was as if she answered me; and not only I but everybody knew she had begun the conversation.

At a sign from the old man the waiters cleared the

table and brought a new bottle of champagne and fresh glasses. She took her glass with a small imperceptible nod toward me.

Tanasi stopped playing. A moment later he was at my table, and as we embraced he said rapidly: "In the name of the Lord, go away. If you stay here a little longer, I shall be boiled in oil to-morrow, and what will happen to you I don't know."

"That's what I told him," my newspaper friend explained; "but these people coming from the other side of the ocean don't understand us any longer."

"But how do you know?" I asked the Gipsy. "How I know! Why, he has looked at me."

I was almost shoved out of the place by my two friends. Their action was meant to make it quite clear to whoever looked on that they were responsible for my leaving. They wanted to ingratiate themselves with the bald-headed, pig-eyed individual. Outside, two sinister-looking individuals were standing at the door.

"The old man's henchmen," my friend informed me. "Had he gotten word to them, I don't know what would have happened."

A one-horse carriage drew up in front of the door. "Come, let's get into it," I said. "Let's go elsewhere," I urged. "Where shall we go?"

"You'd better go back to your hotel and pack."

I refused to take his advice. Still, when we had gone a few moments, I telephoned back to the hotel.

My daughter's voice assured me. She had visitors.

She had called up to her room two Gipsy girls who were singing songs she was anxious to learn.

Our carriage crawled along the narrow illsmelling river that divides Bucharest in two. Homeless people, men, women, and children, were sleeping on the bare cobblestones of the sidewalk and underneath broken-down peasants' wagons. A group of peasants, huddled together, seemed set apart from the rest of the homeless people. They were delegations sent by villages to the capital to complain of injustices committed against them. They were four hundred miles away from home. They had come on foot three months ago. They had not yet seen any one in authority. They were penniless, hungry, too proud to beg or steal, too proud to return home before they had accomplished what they had been sent out to do. I talked to them. They had come to see Voda, the king, but instead they had met a police official who had cursed and beaten them and robbed them.

"Oh, that's nothing," my newspaper friend commented. "Rumania is such a big country now, there are some soreheads, and people who cannot adjust themselves," he explained. Our carriage stopped before a large garden restaurant, with tables underneath bowered vines. The thick bunches of grapes hung so low one could eat from the branches without getting up from the chair. The pungent odor of broiled meats turning on spits over a dozen charcoal fires made me hungry again. Four Gipsy orchestras

played furiously different airs at the same time. Waiters called out in stentorian tones, half French, half Rumanian, "Un poulet fript. Carnati bien fait." Beautiful women wound in and out in a continual procession between tables, smiling and bowing to people they knew and didn't. Gipsy women dressed in immaculate national costumes, heads held high like dark princesses, offered bloodred roses for sale.

Why was it that I was hungry again? Why was I so thirsty? I too wanted to amuse myself riotously, noisily; not because I was happy or gayhearted, but to drown something that was burning within me and that was consuming me. I drank so fast the bottles were empty before they had cooled sufficiently. More wine. Calling the Gipsy leader of the orchestra facing our table, I asked him to play something real. He responded, for I had spoken to him in his language.

But nothing was either passionate enough or rapid enough or noisy enough to suit me. I pounded the table: "Louder, faster. Drink some wine, Gipsy." His effort wasn't great enough to suit. I took the violin from his hand, but handed it quickly back; for I was undecided whether I should play upon it or smash it over somebody's head.

So this was why I had come home, longing to see the place where I was born, longing to see the people I loved so much, eat the food and drink the wine and listen to the songs which had so charmed my youth? I shall be forced to leave to-morrow, because a black-eyed Russian dancer had found pleasure in looking at me. It all seemed so unreal. How could one fight against a power that never manifested itself openly.

"Officially he is nobody; actually he is everything," my friend had said of the old man. The whole country seemed to be ruled by an underground power. There seemed to be a hidden word underneath every word and gesture, behind every gesture and every thought. The wine I had drunk was only the wine of a wine. There was a wine behind that wine. I was only drinking something that was sham, of which the life and strength had been drawn out before it had been given me. Somebody had extracted the taste, the perfume, and the life of it. Still, it was good wine. It had bouquet, fire, body.

The garden was being surrounded by hundreds of people in rags, in peasant costumes, emaciated, disheveled, hungry. I hoped they would do something; that they would close in on us and take us in their midst. We drank, caroused, and amused ourselves, while they were cold and starving.

But no. They merely looked on, waiting for crumbs, the fools. No sooner was a table vacated than a hungry hand stretched itself out for the piece of bread, while other hands fought for the piece of meat rolled in the ashes of cigars and cigarettes negligently shaken upon the plate.

After midnight the place became still livelier. Civilians and swashbuckling handsome officers, accompanied by Parisian-gowned ladies, were waiting in deep rows for some one to get up from a table so that they might take their places. Waiters bowed and explained to guests they would only have to wait a few minutes.

"From where do these people come?" I asked.

"Oh, come. What do you mean by come? They are always here after midnight. It is breakfast for some people," my companion laughed. "The owner of this place has tried to make it more exclusive by doubling the prices after midnight, but it didn't help. People would come here and not elsewhere. It is the style." I saw he was uneasy; anxious to leave.

"You may go," I said. "I intend to stay here a little longer."

"Then I will remain with you." And he filled the glasses again. A waiter bent over to whisper in my ears that somebody wanted to see me immediately.

"Man or woman," I asked.

My friend grew pale. He got up ready to accompany me. He wouldn't let me see anybody alone that night. The waiter explained that it was a lady and I was asked to come alone.

Strange, but I knew who was calling me. I was led to a little private room. Though it was a very warm night, she was wrapped in a long seal fur

coat. We bowed and then shook hands without introducing ourselves. Breathlessly, and so fast I could hardly understand her strongly flavored Russian French, she spluttered: "I have been looking for you all over town for more than an hour. I have come to tell you to go away. Go away quickly. The old man is furious. And I know what that means. Every one in Bucharest knows what it means."

I smiled. "Why should you come to warn me?" "Because, can't you see it was all my fault, Boszhemi. How could I live if something should

happen to you because of me, Boszhemi?"

How Slavic all this! What happened to me didn't really matter to her. Only she hated to lose her tranquillity of mind, peace of her soul. She had really not come to warn me but to avoid suffering to a Russian soul—to a warm, sentimental Russian soul.

"And if I don't want to go?"

"If you don't want to go," she cried out, and raising her hands above her head. Her ample fur sleeves fell to the shoulder and showed a pair of white magnificent arms.

"Yes, if I don't want to go. Am I to be afraid of a fat old Greek?"

"I have put my life in danger for you," the lady cried. "You don't know what I had to do in order to rid myself of him; and how do I know that one of his men hasn't followed me, Boszhemi?" And

without warning she leaned her head against my chest and began to weep copiously. "I am lost, I am ruined!"

At that moment the music outside ceased abruptly. Alarmed, she withdrew from me and opened wide the door of the room.

"What has happened?"

"The king is dead."

After the first few hushed moments the revelers were protesting against the order given to the Gipsies to cease playing. It was an outrage. What if the king had died! The owner of the place, an enormously fat Greek, protested louder than his guests. He was being ruined. The police had ordered there must be no music until after the funeral. Three nights without music.

My newspaper friend was standing beside me. The Russian lady had disappeared.

"Did you hear the news?" he asked me to make conversation.

"Yes, but what is that Greek whispering to the officers and to the others?"

"Oh, he? He is merely telling them not to worry, that the Gipsies will continue to play behind closed doors."

I thought of our speak-easies and bootleggers. There will be bootleg music for three days in Bucharest. Bucharest couldn't possibly live three days without Gipsy music, though the king was dead.

"Who was your visitor?" my friend asked as he

prepared to go.

I hesitated for a moment and then said, "Some fair lady." He smiled, and I knew that the waiter had already told him. We shook hands at the gate of the garden while the guests were leaving in an insincere attitude of grief and mourning.

"And by the way, you don't have to worry about packing. He will be too busy for the next few days to even think of you. I have a suspicion that the death of the king has saved your life. You are lucky. God takes care of children and fools."

As I walked home thinking of what had happened that night, wondering whether after all I hadn't had enough of Bucharest, I saw machineguns being installed in the corners of the streets, upon the steps of the central post-office, at the doors of every institution, in front of the royal palace. Martial law.

Of all people, only the peasants I have seen huddled on the street, on the shore of the river, and who now walked up and down in front of the dead king's palace, seemed sincerely grief-stricken. Their king had died. The city was being decked with mourning bands, but the gay colors of the Rumanian flag smothered the black on doors and windows.

In the lobby of the hotel George Seldes, the American newspaper man, was waiting for me. Other American and French newspaper men had already arrived from Vienna and Budapest, and

BUCHAREST

though it was early in the morning, we celebrated our meeting noisily in the lobby of the hotel.

"Is your room facing the street?" Seldes asked. "Good. An excellent vantage-point from which to watch the funeral procession. It will be a very colorful affair, won't it?"

"Kings don't die every day," an Italian newspaper man—poet of the company—explained. "To our grandchildren it would appear like a legend."

A policeman came in to see me. "You are requested . . ." but behind the servant of the law there appeared an important government official to ask me to interpret for the foreign newspaper correspondents . . . and behind him stood the beaming Russian dancer. She had saved her soul.



"WHEN PARIS WAS MINE"



PARIS WAS NOT YET GREENWICH VILLAGE

"WHEN PARIS WAS MINE"

THOSE were the days when the cafés of Montparnasse had not yet been invaded by Greenwich Villagers from Chicago and New Orleans, shinglehaired women and long-haired men, comedy artists, exhibiting themselves on the terraces for people to look at them.

We were genuine, not like visitors who make up like the lions they have come to see.

That café was more than half our home. We were known as the "Quartet of the Rotonde." Kasha, the oldest one, has since won a reputation as the world's greatest actor. Planaz, the playwright, died before he had finished his masterpiece. Armen, the sculptor, has a longer waiting list than a charity institution. And myself . . . well, the least said the better. We had our own table—the last one near the right wall. At four in the afternoon our waiter tilted the chairs in; the table was reserved.

And there were other quartets, and trios, at adjoining tables. Sometimes our tables were joined together and we formed a large family; discussing earnestly or laughing heartily. Some of these old friends still wear their student caps over their gray

hair and roam the streets of Paris. Ambitious poets have become lawyers, sculptors, tombstone carvers, painters, dress designers. Each one has done as well as the fates have allowed. A few have attained world fame.

And there were "midinettes" in our groups, working girls with aspirations. Some really took singing lessons after work hours. Some only pretended to higher aspirations, preferring our noisy company to the company of their own class or the soul-deadening sameness of their homes. A few who had already arrived, actors, writers, singers, musicians, came to consume their nightly grog at our café, at their old café; not to forget their student days, and also because their hearts swelled when they were pointed out to newcomers: "That one there is Sally the painter. That one in the back, with the red scarf about his neck, is Bouchon the actor."

"Bon soir, Bouchon. Bon soir, Sally."

I had my amie, Germaine. She lived with her brother, a lawyer, on the heights of Montmartre. Germaine studied dramatics; she was not with the Rotonde group. She was tall, brown-eyed, and her little upturned nose could be more insolent than she was and much wittier; and this is saying much for that nose; for Germaine herself was very witty.

I do not remember when and how I first met Germaine. I kissed her bon soir the first evening I brought her home, and for a year we were inseparables. The quartet became a quintet. The observant waiter tilted a fifth chair. She was my amie. The women ceased flirting with me. I was Germaine's ami. Such was the code. I was twenty. She was twenty.

One autumn afternoon while I was trying to keep warm holding my numb hands around a tea-glass, Armen, the tousle-haired, broad-shouldered sculptor, appeared, accompanied by a blonde, blue-eyed, high-cheekboned girl.

"Sonya," he introduced, "from Russia, via Geneva, and a great pianist. This is another musician

from the land of the boyars."

We shook hands. Soon the rest of the quartet arrived. Germaine was late.

We began to question Sonya. Russia was a distant enigmatical country; the Russians very mysterious beings—political refugees, spies, mystics. Sonya's French was poor, but her gestures were eloquent. Her phrases were studded with Russian and German words, but her vivacity, her waving arms, explained everything. Even Planaz, whose phrases were as fluent and colorful as wine drawn from a barrel in sunlight, felt inarticulate before her stuttering French.

Germaine was unusually late. I looked to right and left, expecting her. Having observed my un-

easiness, Armen said mockingly:

"Abandoned? Neglected? Commit suicide, my friend. Planaz would get a few francs writing a sensational story for the newspapers."

Planaz handed me his penknife:

"Oblige a friend. I need money."

When the Russian girl had understood what it was all about, she said patting my hand:

"I am so very sorry. Can't I take the place of the traitress? But she will come. Give her time. She will come. And I shall be sorry."

There was so much charm and whim in her mock consolation, I could not help laughing. Dufour, who sat at another table but had heard what Armen had said, suggested that if not suicide, a murder must be committed; wouldn't Sonya rid herself of Germaine? Or should he advise Germaine to kill me? He was short of funds.

"Planaz would do the story for one paper and I for the other. Please. Please. There has not been a sensational murder in Paris in a week. Have pity on the poor Parisians. Repay their hospitality. They die of boredom. Give them a murder."

The whole café took up the slogan and sang: "Give the poor Parisians a murder."

While we were bantering, trying to outdo one another in silly remarks, Germaine appeared at the door.

"What is this?" she asked.

"Murder! Murder!" they all shouted.

But when we had kissed, Dufour withdrew. He was disappointed.

"There will be no murder to-night," the whole café howled. "Woe! Woe! No murder to-night."

Sonya explained the situation to Germaine and the two girls embraced and laughed until tears came to their eyes.

Each of the students was supplementing the allowance from home with what he could pick up on the side. Planaz, who was reciting his great poetry to us, was not averse to picking up a few francs a month by writing little rhymed paragraphs for newspapers. Armen the sculptor did not consider it below his dignity to do a little commercial work for an architect he knew, and to carve angels' heads on gaudy tombstones. The painter was also a lithographer, and a caricaturist, and a musician; he could supplement his income in a dozen ways. We had to live. What we did for money did not matter.

Sonya was uncompromising in her ideals. At the third meeting she told us bluntly that what we did was nothing less than criminal. Departure from the highest ideals was a crime. As I said, her French was deficient, but her arms and her gestures were eloquent when she spoke. She was Russian and idealistic. We were people without ideals, and we had not known it until then. She denounced us so vigorously, she spoke so convincingly, calling as witnesses the great names of the arts, that within a few weeks Dufour and Planaz ceased to talk about their journalistic exploits. The sculptor was ashamed to mention his earnings on the side, and

I, who played occasionally in a little orchestra in a wayside café, abandoned my job, although doing so brought my income down to only a few francs a day. We were all a little hungry now and could no longer order a second cup; yet we were strangely happier than we had been. We suffered for art.

Sonya was not beautiful. Yet, when she spoke, transparent tints colored her face, her blue eyes became lustrous, and she looked infinitely more attractive than Germaine, who sat quietly by and listened to her open-mouthed. In repose Germaine was infinitely more attractive. In action Sonya

obliterated the French girl completely.

When it got to be so cold that charcoal stoves were put out on the street, I no longer waited as anxiously for Germaine to come, and Sonya was always on time. Germaine made no effort to compete with her, knowing that in a contest between herself and the Russian she would be defeated. And she was as much fascinated by Sonva as I was; as we all were. . . . Soon Sonya learned to express herself better, more fluently, though she never ceased gesticulating. She had a trick of baring her arms for a second when she tossed her head back. And her arms were irresistible. I waited for the rare moment with the keenness of a hunter for the passing flight of a pheasant. She held sway over all of us. She had the history of the great artists at her finger-tips, and she told the most marvelous stories about the robber vagabond poet François Villon.

How she extolled and praised him! She knew more about him than the French poets did.

"And did he prostitute his art?" she would call out. "No. He stole, robbed, begged, but his art he kept pure. That is the only honesty. The other kind of honesty is the merchant's. Did Benvenuto Cellini sell his art? No. No. He lied and begged and murdered. But he was an honest man. His art was true and honest. What he did lives."

And so late one evening I left the Café de la Rotonde with Sonya on my arm instead of accompanying Germaine, as I had done until then.

The following day Germaine said simply: "She is more than I am. If a lesser woman had won you away, it would have maddened me."

Oh, Germaine, Germaine, how much I loved you for saying that! At that moment you rose to unattainable heights; higher than Sonya. If you only had known.

We never left our table before Sonya. The conversation generally lagged until Sonya appeared. At the end of the evening, which sometimes lasted until two in the morning, with the sleepy waiters eying us sideways as the cashier counted the receipts of the day, we waited for Sonya to give the signal of departure. She had her own way of doing that. She would light a cigarette, push her chair away from the table, flick the ashes from her coat, wait a few moments until the bill was paid, and then announce, "We go," leading the four of us

out into the street, with Germaine at the rear. Germaine had become a serious girl. Gone the buoyant flippancy, abandoned the full-throated laughter. At the corner of the boulevard, Sonya would turn around, take my arm, and say to the others, "Now we go, bon soir." And off we were in the opposite direction from the others. I forgot how hungry I was when beside her.

That usually was the end of the performance, and although it was repeated almost nightly, it seemed a new whim of Sonya's. We waited for this moment.

My friends were not jealous of me. They envied me. I grew in their esteem because of Sonya's choice. She was the priestess of high art. She had taught them something, and though what they had learned kept them half starved, they were grateful; pagans who had just discovered the ascetic delights of religion. Planaz inhaled the smoke from her cigarette, which he borrowed for a puff, as if it were incense.

Out of respect for her they never made any allusions about my new *amie*: only Planaz asked me whether I knew how lucky I was. He was writing a drama with her as the central figure.

"Great tragedies are back of her. The table in this café shall be a hallowed shrine in a few years." When Planaz spoke of Sonya he looked like Francis d'Assisi.

I heard her play the piano once and thought her

technique left much to be desired. But then . . . she had been in Siberia.

To-day, twenty-five years later, I still remember the distant aloofness of her kisses when I said good-night at her door. They were hardly more intimate than the kiss of a sister. She never displayed her feelings. She never abandoned herself to her emotions. She reprimanded me when I talked of love to her. Love was of no importance. One had to think of his art only. Hatred, love, poverty, pain, had to go into the making of art, of pure art, and nothing else.

"To be an artist you must suffer. I shall help you suffer to purify yourself. Ah, you Latins . . . you must learn to know what art is."

She had made me feel so unworthy of her. I had been doing transcriptions for the mandolin and the cornet, and turning out melodies for street songs. She had suffered, upholding the great ideal of art, while I had been dragging the whole thing into the mire.

Fearing to lose her companionship, or because of the artistic scruples she had awakened, the four of us grew thinner every day. With no money to spend at the Rotonde, we were emotionally happier.

And then suddenly, much to my dismay and that of my companions, Sonya absented herself from the café four successive nights. We were like lost sheep. We had become dumb. We sat silently till the early hours of the morning, our eyes on the door.

"Have you seen her?"

"Have you?"

"Have you?"

They looked at me with accusing eyes.

Unable to stand the suspense any longer, I went to her home on the fifth night and rang the bell. The irate concierge, in white cotton nightcap, informed me that mademoiselle was not at home. It was midnight. I was beyond myself with grief.

"Something has happened to her," my friends moaned. "Where could she be? Where? How is it you don't know?" they asked me over and over

again.

Other students who had grown accustomed to see her at our table and who had listened in to our discussions leaned over to our table and inquired, "Where is your Russian? Has she gone back to Russia? Was she kidnapped by the czar's secret service?"

Germaine cried. She watched the door, sighing every time it opened and the expected figure did not enter.

I inquired at Sonya's home again the third night. "She is not at home," the concierge answered and slammed the door in my face.

Late one night when I had given up hope of ever seeing her again, Sonya appeared. She was paler than usual. Her eyes were red. She greeted us effusively, asking how we all were. We had not slipped back, had we? She looked at Germaine

quizzically. I ordered beer for all with my last few cents. Sonya plunged her hand into one of her pockets and brought out quite a number of silver pieces. Forty, fifty francs—a fortune!

"Order whatever you wish. To-night I pay for

everything."

We were a little ashamed to let her pay for our drinks. And we said so.

"Petty bourgeois," she grunted. "I am not a woman. I am an artist. You are not men. You are artists. If one of us has money, it is the same as though the others had it. Petty bourgeois."

As I still insisted, she asked savagely, "If it were your money, would you refuse to pay for my drinks? Have you not paid them nightly, when I was out of funds, what? Sit down and never mention that, or . . ."

"Shame, shame," Germaine said looking at me. "You are not worthy of Sonya . . ."

Sonya put the same question to the others.

"Am I less than you?" she asked.

We drank our beer. We had an interesting new topic: artists and money matters. It lasted until the usual hour of departure.

When we were alone, I asked Sonya: "Where

have you been all these evenings?"

She squeezed my arm gently. "That I cannot tell you. Never come to my home to ask about me. When I am away for a few days and you do not see me, just wait for me. I will come. Do not come

to inquire. I am doing things . . . you don't understand . . . secret things . . . sacred things."

The following night and the night that followed I waited and hoped. Saturday and Sunday passed and there was no Sonya. When she had not come for another day, we began to discuss Sonya's absence, trying to keep her presence even if she was not with us. No one was allowed to occupy her chair, and Planaz, gaunter and paler, repeated incessantly: "Remember this table will be a hallowed shrine. We are apostles. Don't you feel the perfume of her being?"

When she finally arrived, after an absence of almost a week, Planaz was not there. He was sick. She insisted that we all go up to his garret to visit him. Planaz had been mowed down by the privations he had had to endure since becoming converted to the holiness of art and abandoning his newspaper work. Planaz's little garret room was bare and cold. He was feverish. Sonya flew down the seven flights of stairs and returned soon with milk and eggs for the sick man. An hour later the sick man took part in the discussion. We all sat on his narrow bed.

Sonya argued: "And what if he dies? What of it? Many others have died in the cause of art. Only those with hearts of grocery men and petty bourgeois have tried to save themselves from starvation by selling their souls. Art demands sacrifice. Like religion, art demands sacrifices."

However, before leaving Planaz's room, Sonya stocked it with nourishing food to last for at least a few days. When we had come down the long stairway she said savagely: "I want to be alone. Good-night," and disappeared rapidly around the corner.

I was hungrier than I had ever been, so hungry the floating odor of bread fresh from the oven of a bakery near-by maddened me like strong drink.

It was raining hard, one of those cold, steady Parisian rains that permeate clothes and flesh and bone. We all separated at the corner, each going in his own direction. I had only gone a short distance, when I heard myself called by name. Germaine was running toward me.

"What is it, Germaine?" I asked.

"Where does Sonya get the money she spends?" Germaine questioned directly putting her arm into mine.

"What are you insinuating, Germaine?" and I

withdrew my arm.

"Oh!" she cried, offended at my thought. "No, but . . . oh, let's have a cup of coffee. I am freezing. I have some money." Seeing my reluctance, she repeated Sonya's words. "What is the difference?" and a little later she added reproachfully, "You have let her pay the bill once . . . why not me?"

When we were seated at the café table Germaine

asked:

"Where does she get the money from? She had never had any money before. She had told me one day that she only receives sixty francs a month to live on. Last week she spent more than sixty francs at the café with us. I have seen her give the waiter

a five-franc tip."

With nothing to say, I reflected aloud. "One never knows with these Russians. One never knows what Russians might do the next moment. A Russian student with whom I had shared my bed one night, because he was homeless, woke me up in the middle of the night and begged me to get out of bed; for he was suddenly overcome by an irrepressible desire to strangle me."

"You have never told me about that . . . but do you think she does what Villon did or what Cellini did?" she inquired timidly. "Does she steal or rob?" Germaine had grown considerably since her association with Sonya. She was no longer a conventional natural patter because it.

tional petty bourgeois.

"Who knows?" I answered, mysteriously, evasively. Germaine understood I knew more than I wanted to tell. We spoke no more about Sonya. We were both very cold. We shivered.

"Shall I bring you home, Germaine?"

"No, no," she answered. "I too want to be ... alone." Imitating Sonya! It was such a coarse imitation. "I want to be alone."

The following evening at the Rotonde my comrades were sitting with their heads close together.

Planaz, who was still very ill, had that morning received a money order of thirty francs from a source he could not account for. They were discussing Sonya and the mysterious source of her wealth. Sonya had sent the money.

I had received my monthly allowance of sixty francs—twelve dollars—that morning. I put the money on the table and asked that drinks and food be served until the money be exhausted. After three drinks on an empty stomach, I boasted, "When this money shall be gone, more of it will come forth."

Germaine's insinuations that Sonya was perhaps doing what François Villon had done made some one refer to the Russian girl as the "Daughter of Villon." "And here is his son."

The truth was I was very uneasy about Sonya. I missed her so much. The mystery surrounding her doings added fuel to my excitable imagination. I had hallucinations in which she was caught by the police and dragged to prison and sentenced to be hanged.

The papers were just then discussing capital punishment. I had never before paid any attention to morbid stories in newspapers. Now I read every word. Hunger and worry had thinned me. My professor of composition was telling me, "Your music used to have a Gargantuan quality; it was loud and strong. It used to flow over, and now it trickles like water from a frozen spring."

Armen, who had always modeled prehistoric

giants with overbulging muscles, now modeled ascetic figurines in wax. Kasha, the actor who had made a reputation as a reciter of *gaudrioles*, risqué poems, now recited mystic poetry. God! We were a hungry lot. And we liked it, or made believe we did; for even I, when I was very hungry, wished I had never met Sonya . . . and never known how poisoned the fleshpots of Egypt were.

A few days later Planaz again received some money from a mysterious source. And there was no

Sonya.

When she appeared again among us, after an absence of a week, Sonya was very pale. Deep black rings circled her eyes. She was even more lavish with her money than before. She ordered drinks for the adjoining table and tipped the waiter liberally, as though she were anxious to get rid of her money.

When we were alone, the two of us, at her door, I said:

"You must tell me, Sonya, where you are when you are away."

"Why must I?" she countered, dropping my arm; and in a softer voice she added, "If you only had the courage! But I cannot ask it of you. Go home and sleep in peace."

She closed the door in my face. I could hear her

laugh as she mounted the stairs.

I walked home very much ashamed of myself. She was a great woman. Where did I stand on the ladder of human equations? On the bottom rung?

Having spent so thoughtlessly my few francs, hunger gnawed at me again the following day. I heard very little of what my red-bearded professor of harmony said during class. I tried to make hunger help me in my work, but all I composed was but miserable drivel; it lacked buoyancy, life, spirit. Instead of a dance, I composed a litany . . . a thin litany.

I waited for the evening, hoping some one might have a few cents to spare for nourishing food. Oh, for a plate of warm soup—pea soup, thick with bread crumbs. But not one of them had any money. It was a few days before the first of the month and each one had spent his allowance before that date. The best I could do was to get a glass of wine. It increased my hunger but exhilarated me. Drunk, I began to talk almost as violently as Sonya. My hungry companions were also of one mind. We would make a revolution so that Planaz could get well and write his great play in peace; so that Armen should be able to carve his wonderful statues; so that each one of us should be able to do his work. That was important. Nothing else was. Yet, after all this wild, loud talk we separated rather peacefully at the corner of the street, each going his own way.

The following day was Saturday. Sonya appeared a little before midnight. We frankly avowed that we had been terribly hungry the last few days. Planaz, who had just come out of bed, had not

eaten anything in forty-eight hours. I had stood for hours at the open door of a restaurant filling my nostrils with the odor of onion soup. We were in revolt. Sonya was in tears; still she spoke depreciatingly of the former days when we prostituted our art for the sake of our stomachs. We followed her to a little restaurant, where we ate all that was put before us.

Sonya ate very little. She watched us devour the food. At the end of the meal we returned to the Rotonde. Sonya urged beer and wine on us.

"Starving for your art! He, he," an old man laughed at us. "That woman will kill you all with her talk and blue eyes."

Sonya and I had a long talk that evening. The rainy season was over. It was a very mild night. Big trucks laden with green vegetables, smelling of field and garden, rumbled past us down the street to the market-place. An intoxicating odor of wine, of wine-soaked oakwood, was wafted from across the Seine. We sat down. I took hold of both her hands and pleaded with her to let me assist her in whatever she was doing. My life did not matter much while hers was endangered. My liberty was but an empty name when hers was shadowed. I told her of my fears, of my anguish when I did not see her. I told her how I could neither sleep nor rest, thinking of her day and night. But if she had no confidence in me it were better we separated . . . better we never saw one another again.

"No," she replied, stroking my hair. "No. Not yet. When the time comes I shall tell you. Have confidence in me," she pleaded.

I tasted the salt of her tears when I kissed her cheek bidding her good-night. I walked the streets until the morning.

"She loves me. She loves me."

I was intoxicated by romance and mystery. She absented herself again for a week from the café. Meanwhile, several of us had got our allowances and were lavishly spending it. Money had lost its value. Improvidence was obligatory. There was no mine and thine. Sonya had taught us that.

Though Germaine too had begun to stay away a few times during the week, we never talked of her but of the marvelous Sonya, of her idealism, and of her wonderful devotion to art. She could have led us anywhere.

Then it was that Planaz became seriously ill once more. I dared to leave a note at Sonya's home, telling of Planaz's plight.

We had pooled together all our resources to call a physician and to keep his garret warm while he was in bed. Now we needed her superior judgment and knowledge.

Sonya was at his bedside after the midnight hour. Planaz was fighting for life. The doctor sent him off to a hospital one day when Sonya was away. Coming back alone from the hospital, my attention was attracted by the gaudy signs of one of the early

cinematograph houses. I was tired. I needed relaxation. I entered.

In the darkness ahead of me, bent closely over a miserable piano, I recognized the bobbed blonde head of Sonya. I could have beaten her to death. She! She who preached for the highest ideals in art, playing in a movie theater! That was what she was doing while I worried; while we felt so small before her! The hunger we had suffered because of her! I had abandoned Germaine for her. Planaz was dying; Armen was but a shadow; red-cheeked Germaine looked like a ghost.

I waited for her at the door. Sonya crumbled when she saw me, like a naughty child caught

stealing a pot of jam.

A great light came to me. Here was the charm of her—the reality of Sonya. I looked at her deeply circled eyes, at her pale face and hollow cheeks, and understood. That was how she got the money for Planaz . . . and for our food when we were

hungry!

"You will detest me now. . . . Germaine is so beautiful . . . and I wanted you. . . . Forgive me. . . . I have almost killed you all with my words. . . . When I was not with you I cried. I could not come every night to see you all so hungry—hungry because of me." She leaned against me and wept. "But what could I do to compete with Germaine! I could talk—talk. We Russians can talk. And you were like children. You believed

"WHEN PARIS WAS MINE"

words. Russians would have understood. Return to the fleshpots. Art is something to live for and not to die of. It is not a disease. Will you ever forgive me?"

To-day she is one of the best-known emotional actresses. Planaz died in the hospital.



















921 .B517

124685 WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Stevens Point, Wisconsin

